

A visit to the grasslands of the north provides a glimpse of a very different China.

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As a DJ, Zhang feels like a prophet. He is always at least one step ahead of the listeners.

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It's amazing that this wonder child has proved himself to be an artist of such maturity and depth well beyond his years.

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BEIJING TODAY

FRIDAY JUNE 8 2001

NO. 5

CN11-0109

HTTP://WWW.YNET.COM



Hello, Lao Wa



Swedish table-tennis star Jan-Ove Waldner rides through the capital city.

Photo by Jia Ting

By Guo Tingting / Xiao Rong

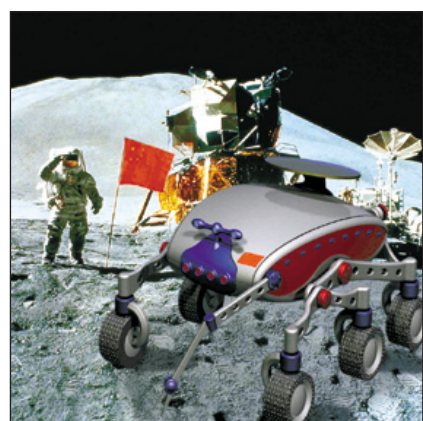
Jan-Ove Waldner has come to Beijing. OK, let's try that lead again. Don't look now but Lao Wa is here. Still don't get it? You are obviously not a Chinese.

Lao Wa, 35, is a household name in this table-tennis-crazy nation. But he came to Beijing to reprise a rather different role: film star. In the Olympic bid film directed by Zhang Yimou, Lao Wa strolls Beijing streets just like any other ordinary foreign traveler. Except of course in Beijing, Waldner actually enjoys a certain celebrity.

Standing on the steps of the shimmering Oriental Plaza, Waldner repeats his prepared Chinese lines for over two hours before the director is satisfied. The sun broils the besuited Waldner nicely. He gulps down four bottles of water. Waldner says later that his first acting role made him feel as nervous as in a competition.

"I like Beijing," he says in the film "Every time I come here, I'm very happy." He goes on in praise of pingpong, tall buildings and so on. The first time Waldner came to Beijing was in 1981. Over the past 20 years, he has visited on average two or three times a year in various competitions. The film will be shown to the members of the International Olympic Committee before July 13's final vote in Moscow.

Buggy Rocks Visitors' World



A computer simulated picture of the lunar buggy

Photo provided by Guo Jianjun

By Xiao Rong

A lunar buggy is a top draw at the Art and Science International Exhibition and Global Symposium for the 90th anniversary of the founding of Tsinghua University.

"The lunar buggy has six wheels, with two on each side connected by two rocker arms," said Guo Jianjun of the Academy of Arts and Design of Tsinghua University, chief designer of the buggy. "There is also a rock-arm at the back of the car to alleviate body stress. Each of the buggy's wheels can operate separately because they each have engines powered by a battery and a solar cell. With its unique driving system, the lunar

buggy can easily overcome 18-centimeter-high obstacles on the moon without much difficulty."

The buggy sports four searchlights in front and a three-dimensional stereoscopic camera. The camera, which has a holographic capability, can send photos back to a control center on Earth.

Many other items representing the idea of conceptual design are on display at the symposium. Lu Xiaobo, director of the Department of Industrial Design of the Academy of Arts and Design of Tsinghua University, says that conceptual design focuses on optimizing the union of science and the arts. Lu said, "works of conceptual design should influence or even lead new technological trends."

EDITOR: LIU FENG DESIGNER: PANG LEI

Star CEO Quits

"If a certain behavior is beneficial to shareholders, I will follow the rules, even though I may not agree with it".
—Wang Zhidong

By Xia Lei

The CEO of Sina.com has resigned amid rumors of his company's possible merger with China.com.

Sina simultaneously announced layoffs for 15% of its staff by the end of June. But a senior Sina executive denied Wang Zhidong's resignation had any links to the China.com merger.

Long regarded as an IT industry pioneer, Sina's fast information service and distinctive design had once been hailed as the ideal recipe for dotcom success.

"The resignation of Wang Zhidong will surely hurt operations at Sina.com.cn. He has made a great contribution to the development of the company," said Wang Yan, the new Sina president. He said Wang Zhidong had announced his resignation

at a board meeting in the USA in late May. Some board members expressed the hope Wang Zhidong, who had successfully led Sina to listing on the NASDAQ, will remain as a senior advisor.

Some analysts speculate it is common practice for one of two CEOs to fall on his sword in the event of a merger. Thus, they conclude a merger between China.com and Sina.com.cn is imminent.



Photo by Chen Shuyi



Earlier in the year, Wang said "I'm a little bit special in Sina, for it was I who founded it to a certain extent. But Sina is not mine. Under such circumstances, I am not only a CEO, but also a professional manager. So I have to obey the rules of the game. With this double identity, if a certain behavior is beneficial to shareholders according to my judgment, and they are willing to accept it, I will execute the decision in accordance with the rules of the game, even though I may not agree with it emotionally." "If I don't like it, I'll find an opportunity to quit. Anyway, I'll try to begin well and end well."

Photo by Cheng Tielang

Follow the Old Camel Road

By Xia Lei / Fan Hongwei

Two Chinese scientists, two camel experts from foreign countries and one photographer will ride down a forgotten trade route in Africa this October.

John Hare, founder of the World Wild Camel Foundation, the initiator of this expedition, said it would take four months to travel along the 2,400-kilometer trail by camel.

They will set off from north Nigeria, cross the Niger and arrive at Tarabulus in Libya.

"This is a very old camel road," said Hare. "But now there are no camels there. To the best of my knowledge, no one has taken the trail since 1906."

Professor Yuan Guoying of the Xinjiang Environmental Protection Research Institute and Yuan Lei of the Xinjiang Environmental Monitoring Center will also compare

desertification differences between the Sahara and the Gobi. "They are both my good friends," said Hare. "We have made several scientific expeditions in the Gobi in Xinjiang."

The goal of the expedition is to draw attention to protection of the wild camel, of which only 730-800 remain in the world. "An expert on camels and a photographer from National Geographic will be included in the expedition," said Hare.



John Hare and Yuan Guoying

"I hope there will be some sponsors from China to support the two Chinese scientists. It will make this expedition more meaningful," said Hare. Hare identified two obstacles for the trip: visas, and water.

Wage Reform Pilot Program for 44 S.O.E.s

No Limit on Total Wage Bill

By Li Jingli

From this month, Beijing will launch a 'total wage decision mechanism' reform pilot program, in forty-four large to medium state owned enterprises. In the past, the government set the total maximum wage cost of state owned enterprises. The reform will give those enterprises full control over their wages bills.

At a labor wage conference held last Friday by the Beijing Labor and Social Security Bureau, it was revealed that the pilot program includes three aspects: improving transparency by letting enterprises set wages through discussion, regulating salary allotment by setting up an income account, and giving top officials fixed annual salaries based on internal discussions.

Enterprises under the pilot program will be able to decide the wage level free of government intervention.

Under the basis of guaranteeing state property's value and increment, and abiding by relevant property laws, the employer and employees can sit down and decide the wage increase rate for the current year under the guidelines set by the government. The

company will show the employees its bottom line, and inform them how much their wages can increase and the company's goal for the year. If those companies can make a good profit, then there should be no limit on the wage upside.

As to the top officials of state owned enterprises, a fixed annual salary is seen as desirable, as high salaries can stimulate executives

to work harder and achieve better productivity for the company.

Relevant government authorities will play a 'post-supervision' role, tracking and supervising those companies' performance, in order to determine whether such wage levels are detrimental to state assets, whether they are in line with asset accrument, and whether profit goals can be realized.

China Enhances Supervision on Auditing

By Yang Xiao

The China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) and the Ministry of Finance has jointly granted the 5 biggest international accounting firms temporary licenses. The licenses allow the firms to audit financial institutions seeking a domestic public listing. The 5 firms are DTT, KPMG, Arthur Andersen, Ernst & Young and Price Water House Coopers. Not long ago, the China Merchant Bank announced it was planning an IPO on the A-share market, worth 10 billion yuan. Another bank, Hua Xia Bank also plans an IPO at the end of this year. The move by the CSRC is aimed at minimizing the risks involved in such actions.

Four month ago, the authorities issued a circular requiring both an overseas and domestic accounting firm to audit financial institutions seeking domestic public listings. Furthermore, the audit by the two accounting firms should be conducted independently.

The move is intended to ensure the accuracy of the financial figures for banks, insurers and securities firms applying for public listing according to international standards. It will also facilitate better supervision from regulators over their performance and information disclosure after the listing, and help investors make appropriate investment decisions.

Overseas accounting firms should first acquire a temporary license from the CSRC and the Ministry of Finance, and the license needs to be renewed each year.

The relevant authorities will supervise the services of the authorized accounting firms.

Pirate Software Users to be fined

By Li Jingli

The State Copyright Bureau says it will investigate and punish end users who use pirate software or illegally use the authorized versions. An end user is defined as a user who does not use the original version to make and sell copies.

The punishments include fines, the sum of which can be two to five times that of the software's legal version.

Since early this year, the State Copyright Bureau and local copyright regulators have adopted a series of methods to strengthen protection over the software industry, including improving the software copyright registration process, promoting software legalization, and making greater efforts to crack down on software piracy.

Consumer Sentiment Continues to Surge

Chinese consumer confidence in April rose to the highest level in the last two years, said the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

Bureau statistics show that the consumer contentment index rose to 96 points, one point higher than that in March, which contributed to the surge of the confidence index to 97.5 points.

The rise demonstrated that Chinese consumers are contented with the current economic conditions and that they are willing to buy more, according to the report.

In April, when the week-long vacation of May 1 was around the corner, stores gave discounts and consumers seized it a good season to purchase durable goods. Meanwhile, government officials and retirees saw a rise in their wage and pension in that month, which added to their purchasing power.

However, the bureau report said that the consumer expectations index remained the same as in March. (Xinhua)

Government to Protect Interests of Stockholders



Laura Cha Shih May-lung
Photo by Fa Man

Top officials from the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) have pledged to accelerate the improvement of internal management of local listed companies in an effort to further regularize and develop the country's capital market.

The pledge was made by CSRC's Chairman Zhou Xiaochuan and Vice-Chairperson Laura Cha Shih May-lung at a symposium on the control of the country's listed firms.

China Oils and Food Group Listing on A Market



A building on Chang'an Ave. belonging to China Oils and Food Group.
Photo by Chen Shuyi

By Su Wei

China Oils and Food Group, the largest edible oils and food import & export trading company in China, is preparing for listing on the A share market. Liu Fuchun, General Manager of China Oils and Food Group made the announcement at the company's recent introduction and promotion conference.

Fund merging is not the only purpose of the company's A share listing. In 1998, the China Securities Regulatory Commission (CSRC) gave China Oils and Food Group the go-ahead to list on the A share market. However, in order to focus on development of the company, Liu says the group passed up the rare opportunity. Now, he says, the time is right, in terms

of the global development of the group.

Liu says listing on the A share market is a strategic step in seeking market potential and development for the group. After a one-year reorganization and reform, the group has merged all capital, except for the key national businesses (oils and food), into its Hong Kong branch, and has distributed the merged capital into China Food and Pengli International, two listed companies on the Hong Kong exchange. In the first quarter, China Oils and Food Group successfully incorporated its wine business, mainly consisting of its Great Wall brand wine, and the edible oil business, including the Fu Lin Men brand, into China Food, now China Oils and Food International.



A new Buick Sail on the way to the market.

Photo by Kong Wenqing

Buick Sail Hits the Market

By Zhao Hongyi

New Buick Sail Exciting the Car Market in Beijing After waiting for more than a year, car consumers and fans in Beijing finally have the opportunity to check out the new Buick Sail, the latest of the so called economical small-cars.

The Buick Sail is manufactured by Shanghai GM Automobile, a joint venture between Shanghai Automobile Manufacturing Co. and American auto giant, General Motors (GM). The launch of the Buick Sail in Beijing, even though it occurred a little later than in southern China, has attracted a great deal of attention from both consumers and the media.

Based on the original model of the early 1990s' Corsa from Opel, GM's subsidiary in Europe, the new Buick Sail, with a Chi-

nese name meaning, 'better than Europe (European model)', is manufactured with GM's latest technology and, according to Shanghai GM, boasts over 100 new designs and improvements on the European model. The demand for economical, family use small cars in the Chinese market has been strong for several years, and all the current automobile manufacturers have introduced models aimed at meeting this demand.

Currently, there are more than ten such models on the market. There are three versions of Shanghai GM's Sail, the Sail SL, Sail SLX and Sail AT, priced at 100,000 yuan, 112,000 yuan and 125,000 yuan respectively, and the company says it plans to produce a total of 30,000 to 50,000 units next year.

There have been a few complaints from early buyers, mainly

that the interior is too cramped, while some argue that 80,000 yuan would be a more appropriate price. However most market experts agree that a 100,000 to 125,000 yuan price tag is reasonable for a car of this size equipped with ABS, airbags and a 1.6-litre electronic-fuel-injection engine.

Prospective car buyers will have even more choices soon, with a number of new, low-price models on the way, including Toyota's Vitz and Platz from its Tianjin joint venture, and Volkswagen's Polo from Shanghai and Bora from Changchun.

Meanwhile, many consumers are holding onto their cash, as domestic car prices are expected to fall even further as tariffs on auto imports are reduced from the current 80 to 100 per cent to 25 per cent by 2008, following China's accession to the World Trade Organization.

China Cultivating High-tech Start-ups

China is going all out to cultivate high technology start-ups with its national high-tech industrial zones, incubators, venture capital and intermediate agencies.

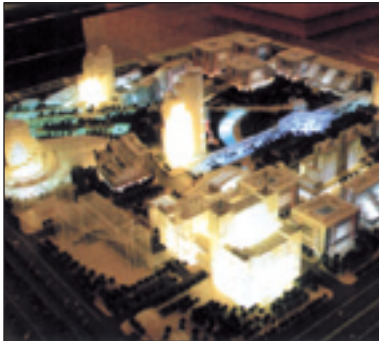
At the joint Chinese-German Workshop on Science for Innovation which started Tuesday, Shi Dinghuan, director of High and New Technological Development and Industrialization Department of the Ministry of Science and Technology, said that all those means help boost the high-tech start-ups nationwide.

China's 53 national New and High Technology Industries Development Zones (NHTIDZ) netted 794.2 billion yuan (95.7 billion U.S. dollars) worth of gross industrial output value, contrib-

uted 46 billion yuan to the state revenue, and exported 18.6 billion U.S. dollars worth of goods. The figures were 100 times higher than those of 1991, when the country began establishing the zones, Shi said.

Statistics show that among the 20,796 enterprises in the national zones, 1,252 each had an annual output value of more than 100 million yuan; 143, over 1 billion yuan; and 6, over 10 billion yuan.

Learning from the developed countries, China established more than 100 incubators for high technology enterprises. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Science and Technology and the Ministry of Education jointly masterminded the pilot high technology zones in universities.



Model of West District of Zhongguancun.

A total of 659 million yuan worth of state innovation funds was allocated to 872 projects in 2000, which, when completed, might achieve 11.11 billion yuan worth of industrial added value and create 45,300 job opportunities. The state has constructed a nationwide network for promoting scientific and technological innovation, including production promotion centers, the Technological Innovation Strategy and Management Research Center of the Ministry of Science and Technology, and incubators. (Xinhua)

Richard Li to Lay Himself Off?

PCCW Searches for New CEO

By James Young

Internet group Pacific Century Cyber Works (PCCW) has appointed headhunters to find a chief executive to replace 34-year-old founder Richard Li, the *Financial Times* reported on May 17, quoting sources close to the board.

Mission: to find a talented CEO

PCCW is focusing on North America as it hunts for a successor. The Hong Kong Internet and telephone company has hired Heidrick & Struggles International, a US executive search firm, to find an experienced telecommunications executive. Industry sources said PCCW is considering Alex Mandl, who resigned in April as chairman and chief executive of bankrupt Virginian Teligent.

Li is expected to take a less operational role following a series of recent setbacks to the company, according to the paper. The sources told the *Financial Times* a search was under way to find an experienced U.S. telecommunications executive to take day-to-day responsibility for the company, leaving Li to concentrate on strategy.

Li told the paper he had no immediate plans to change his role, but that he may step back in six months if a suitable replacement could be found.

"I have no intention at the moment of standing down, but, as a shareholder, if I feel someone else would be better at putting (PCCW) in the right shape for the long term, I would not hesitate. I cannot see this will come this year," Li said.

PCCW has been dogged by criticism that it lacks operational and technical expertise, and Li certainly lacks experience managing a corporation of this size, with 14,000 employees. During the past year, some of the company's most senior technical executives have left, leaving Li's coterie of deal makers to grapple with the actual nuts and bolts of the telecom business.

Symbol of Asia's Internet, and then bubbles

As executive chairman of PCCW, Li at one stage possessed a \$ 9 billion dollar fortune. His father Li Ka-shing spent most of his life amassing a similar amount, but it took young Li only 7 years. But now he has presided over a 90 per cent fall in his company's share price, since bidding for control of Hong Kong Telecom (HKT) with highly



Richard Li, 34-year-old, is considered the world's best diamond bachelor. Photos by Files



Elder Brother Victor Li



Father Li Ka-shing



Newcomer Alex Mandl

rated Internet shares in February 2000.

Wired to the new generation, Richard saw the opportunity to launch satellite transmission from the Hutchison platform. He established Star TV in 1990s, with the help of 125.5 million from his father. Four years later, Richard sold Star TV to Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation for nearly 1 billion dollars, and set up the Pacific Century Group with the proceeds.

The group languished for years until Li made a sensational re-en-

try into the hi-tech world in 1999 by transforming it into PCCW with an ambitious promise to build a broadband network for Asia.

A year later came the ultimate coup when Li beat Singapore Telecom in the fight for HKT. Just as the father captured the commercial real estate market, so the son seemed to be conquering the electronic world. He made his mark last August with the closing of the HK\$ 28 billion (\$3.6 billion) purchase of HKT, Asia's largest deal outside Japan to date.

Then on May 27, 2001, PCCW reported a record loss driven by falls in the value of its investments and interest charges. The net loss of HK\$ 6.91 billion (\$ 885 million) compared with a profit of HK\$ 347 million the previous year, and was sharply higher than analysts' expectations. The figures included about four months of contributions from HKT, which PCCW bought from Cable and Wireless of the UK in August the year before.

Pay Back the Debts!

Some experts consider that Li's decision maybe come from shareholders' pressure. Underlying the losses was shrinking revenues in the company's core telecom arm. The results showed the difficulty facing the debt-burdened PCCW in fulfilling its ambitious plan of becoming the region's first main integrated Internet and telecom group. PCCW paid for its \$ 28 billion takeover of HKT with cash and shares backed by about \$ 12 billion of bank loans in 3 years. PCCW is entitled to the rights until the date of disclosing its 2001/2002 year-end report. The company's short-term debts totaled \$ 4.7 billion as of the end of the year 2000. PCCW has issued convertible bonds, worth \$ 750 million, to Australia-based Telstra.

However, its share price has plunged on souring telecom and Internet sentiment and worries about a share overhang. On Wednesday it was at HK\$ 2.6, down nearly 87 percent from a year ago.

The Li Family and the Newcomer

Father Li Ka-shing is the chairman of Hutchinson Whampoa and the richest man in Hong Kong. Li senior began his career in 1940 by manufacturing plastic flowers. He moved through real estate to gain a foothold in the colonial trading world through his controlling stake in Hutchison Whampoa. Richard and elder brother Victor had an early taste of big business, sitting in on Li Ka-shing's board meetings and no doubt learning from their father's giant killing style.

Elder brother Victor Li, Now Vice-Chairman of Hutchison Whampoa, is already tipped to take over when his father dies.

Newcomer Alex Mandl, who resigned last month as chairman and chief executive of Teligent, a telecoms start-up which filed for bankruptcy protection under Chapter 11. Mr. Mandl is no stranger to sprawling telephone companies: before joining Teligent he was the boss at AT&T.



Robert Kiyosaki

Listen to Rich Dad

By Yang Xiao

Robert Kiyosaki is an investor, businessman and best-selling author. His most popular book, *Rich Dad Poor Dad*, reveals what the rich teach their kids about money that the poor and middle class do not. "The main reason people struggle financially is because they spent years in school but learned nothing about money. The result is people learn to work for money, but never learn how to have money work for them," he says.

Born and raised in Ha-

waii, Kiyosaki is fourth-generation Japanese American.

In 1997 Robert wrote *Rich Dad Poor Dad*, the number one *New York Times* best-seller. He followed with *Rich Dad's Cashflow Quadrant* and *Rich Dad's Guide to Investing* - all 3 books have been simultaneously on the top 10 best seller lists of *The Wall Street Journal*, *USA Today* and *the New York Times*.

He has a profound message for those wanting to improve their financial lives. That message is: "With every dollar in your hand, you have the power to choose to be rich, poor or middle class."



The agent Tang Xiaoming have got a fortune for Rich Dad series

Photos by Chen Shuyi

By Yang Xiao

"My poor dad often said... My rich dad said ..." *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* author Robert Kiyosaki always highlights the differences between his two fathers, and his concern about the growing gap between the "haves" and "have-nots".

On June 1, Kiyosaki came to Beijing to give a lecture. Although the entrance fee was 200 yuan, the hall, and even the corridors outside were filled with people. The price of his patented board game *Cashflows* is 298 yuan, equivalent to one-third of the average monthly salary. "My son will love it!" One buyer said with enthusiasm.

Kiyosaki is now a celebrity here in Beijing. For that, we have to thank Tang Xiaoming and his company Beijing Financial Literacy Training Center. Tang is your typical wheeler-dealer entrepreneur. Over seven years, he established several unsuccessful small firms and made little money, until Kiyosaki came.

As Kiyosaki's Chinese agent, Tang struck a deal with China's official publishers and imported *Rich Dad* series to China. Tang says he invested hundreds of thousands of yuan in the project. They made purple covers for each book, and said these books had already sold more than a million. Then they

Entrepreneur Shares Business Skills

sold more than a million copies in China. With one golden opportunity, Tang had become a "rich dad".

Then Tang began to plan for *Rich Dad* expansion. He established the Financial Literacy Training Centre where students could improve their financial nous and published another two books. He imported the game "Cashflows". Finally he invited Kiyosaki to Beijing.

Tang put word out over the Internet two weeks ahead and sold out thousands of tickets. He attracted media attention. He succeeded. Not only did he boost his products, but he also made a profit.

Kiyosaki and Tang Xiaoming agree only a few people can be millionaires. *Rich Dad* teaches how to become a millionaire and one suggestion is to take a short-term education course such as a "Rich Dad" course. Somebody criticized the course. One sociologist at Beijing Normal University said a millionaire has professional knowledge. Millionaires don't rely on some idea but plentiful knowledge.

Tang Xiaoming replies that the *Rich Dad* series have three books so far. The first book introduces the idea of *Rich Dad*, the second and third tell you how to get rich. But first of all, he said people must change their middle-class thinking into *Rich Dad* thinking.

Now Tang has made a fortune selling *Rich Dads*, but still he remains unsatisfied. Pirated books bother him. But he warns that incoming competitors with lesser skills could ruin the market. He has also established four branches around the country.

Capital and Media Share Profits

China Kejian makes a rapid rise of 25% over one week. Analysts suspect a conspiracy between illegal speculators and media.

By Yang Xiao

China's stock market is immature. Speculators can make a large amount of money in a short time with just a small piece of insider news. Two week ago, a business newspaper in Beijing published such a piece of insider information - China's largest computer producer Legend Holdings Ltd. will merge with the Shenzhen listed mobile phone company China Kejian (0035) in the near future. The news report 'unveiled' the reasons why Kejian was seeking a buyer for its shares and details of the negotiations between the two parties. The following Monday, Kejian shares rose 10% in one hour and a half. At the same time both parties denied the report. Last week, the stock surged more than 25% from 25.95 to 33.98 yuan.

Anyone who invested heavily in Kejian stocks before the report came out, would have made a 25% profit in a very short time, with no risks. Professor Qin Chijiang from China Economic & Finance University says this is a specific phenomenon found only in China. Illegal speculators and traders (personal or institutional investors who control the stock movements) co-operate with media, release some fake news to the public, and then, share the profits. At times, illegal speculators have done this with listed companies as well.

Xu Feng, a market analyst in Beijing says, "You can see the market response. The conversion ratio is now over 50%. It is the signal



Hou Ziqiang, Chairman of China Kejian, denied news of the merger on May 28. Last week, the stock surged from 25.95 to 33.98 yuan.

Photo by Fan Jiwen

that illegal speculators have sold out all their stocks. Realignment is always the hot topic in the market. A merger between Legend and Kejian could create a number of beneficial results, meanwhile it has been exploited."

This Monday another PT stock faced similar circumstances, with its price being deeply influenced by insider news. Each time, the watchdog China Securities Regularly Commission (CSRC) makes little or no response. As a result, such exploitation occurs again and again. The losers are always the common shareholders. Some people will ask, "Why does the CSRC not respond?"

Generally they have the power and the means to do so. But as one analyst pointed out, they have the responsibility to make the market prosperous. They have to allow some illegal activities and sacrifice the minority's benefits. As a Chinese proverb says: There will be no fish if the water is too pure.

China Kejian, established in 1984, is an affiliated enterprise with the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS). The company's three main business sectors, electronic medical equipment, cellular phones, and trading (sales commissions by selling foreign branded cellular phones) account for a large portion of its revenues. The company is currently cash-strapped and looking for partners. Legend Holdings is another affiliated enterprise with the CAS and has no license for producing mobile phones. The article about the alleged merger made its claims on the basis of these facts..

Insurance Giants Poised to Enter China Market

With the country's entering into the World Trade Organization (WTO), hundreds of foreign insurance companies line up anticipating access into China's insurance market. Experts believe that an earthquake is to come in the domestic insurance market.

By Zhao Hongyi

After many years of waiting, many foreign insurance companies are eagerly anticipating entry into China's insurance market.

Many of these companies have established representative offices in China for several years, even decades. "We have got all the preparations done and are waiting for the operational license from Chinese government," said Dr. Ron Kuang, chief representative of CIGNA's Beijing office.

Like CIGNA, a famous Philadelphia-based American insurance company which opened its representative office in Beijing seven years ago, many other international insurance giants have also waited for several years for the operational licenses from Chinese authorities. These giants include New York Life, Met Life, the Commercial Union Assurance Company and the AXA Group.

According to a survey conducted earlier this year, there have already been over 200 representative offices set up by more than 100 insurance companies from countries like U.S., Britain, Japan, Canada, Switzerland, Germany and France. By the end of January this year, some companies have started operating insurance businesses in designated Chinese cities like Shanghai,



Foreign insurance companies are looking for more access into China's market. Photo by Chen Shuyi

Guangzhou and Shenzhen. These companies include American International Assurance (AIA), Tokyo Marine from Japan and Winterthur from Switzerland. In the competitive insurance market of Shanghai, which was opened to foreign competitors first, those foreign insurance companies under operation have already occupied a market portion of 14.5%.

As stated in the regulations set by China Insurance Regulatory Commission (CIRC), foreign insurance companies need to have an insurance business in operation for more than thirty years, total assets over US\$5 billion and a representative office in China for at least two years before applying to operate in the market here.

These criteria in fact mean little to the

big insurance companies, who are many times stronger than their Chinese counterparts in regard to capital, skills, services and management experiences. It is believed that once these giants start their operation in China after the country's entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO), the influence they bring will be great.

Experts believe that the in-rush of foreign insurance companies will certainly benefit Chinese consumers as long as the security of nation's capital deposit is guaranteed. "With more fierce competition, the high premiums currently offered by domestic insurance companies will drop immediately. The difficult settlement of claims will also be gone," said experts from the industry.

Other experts pointed out the weaknesses in China's insurance industry. "China's insurance industry is at the very beginning of its development and lacks the market supplying capability and sustainability."

"With China's entry into WTO, the key point to challenge the competition is the reforms in the operating mechanism, for example, an independent board of directors, and tougher, closer supervision. Otherwise, there will not be any management renovation and product designs. You can not survive only through price cutting and other simple means while facing stronger and more complex competitors"

CTS International to Acquire Travel Agencies



CTS headquarter in Beijing
Photo by Mily

By Zhao Hongyi

China Travel Service (CTS) Group, already the No. 1 in China's tourism market, is preparing for a large-scale extensive acquisition worth 2 billion yuan, according to a report by Beijing Youth Daily, the most popular daily newspaper in Beijing.

The report quoted Mr. Che Shujian, chairman of the board of the Group, confirming that the acquisition initiative, which is very important to the Group, will be released within the next two or three months. Mr. Shen Zhuqing, general man-

ager and member of the board of CTS International, CTS's branch in Hong Kong and the real buyer, acknowledged that they are investigating the purchase of those profiting domestic travel agencies or those with profiting potentialities. Also, according to Mr. Shen, the total number of agencies to be purchased will be around 300. All transactions will be handled in cash and will aim at obtaining the majority share holding rights.

The total amount of 2 billion yuan will be a little higher than the 1.911 billion yuan CTS International offered in March this year for its acquisition of the tourism properties from the Group, its parent company. "The CTS International has 2 billion yuan available. Besides, CTS International will sell out its Weihe Electric Plant in Shaanxi Province which will definitely bring additional cash to the company," said Mr. Shen. "The net debt/property ratio of the company will be further reduced to 14%."

As Mr. Che expressed to our reporter, CTS International has no intention of distributing additional shares in the stock market to raise money for the expansion. Instead, raising the net debt/property ratio is the method under consideration.



The information industry is the new frontier for the country's economic development.
Photo by Lou Ningwei

Growth of Information Industry to Be Accelerated

China's information industry is set to work for an annual growth rate of 20 percent in the coming five years, with its value added accounting for seven percent of the nation's gross domestic product by the year 2005.

Statistics show that the annual output value of the indus-

try's electronic and information product manufacturing sector topped one trillion yuan (about 120 billion U.S. dollars) in 2000, when total exports reached 55.1 billion U.S. dollars. The information industry has become a major pillar industry and the top exporter of the country.

The Chinese government will

make great efforts to push forward and give priority to the application of information technology to boost economic and social development.

Lu Xinkui, deputy minister of information industry, said that the information industry has maintained a strong growth momentum since the beginning of 2001. It scored a growth rate of 32 percent in the January-March period, nearly 13 percent higher than that in the same period last year.

(Xinhua)

Domestic Retailers Seeking Foreign Investment



China's retail market is in the process of both reforming and rapid growing, which brings fierce and complex competition.

Photo by Chen Shuyi

By Zhao Hongyi

Guomei Electrical Appliances Group, one of the three retail giants in China's electrical home appliance market, is in contact with an American electrical home appliance retail group in a hope to jointly develop China's huge home

appliance market by means of a majority share holding, according to resources from Guomei.

In 2000, fierce competition was seen in the domestic market, particularly among the three giants, Guomei, Suning and Sanlian. Guomei established 35 subsidiaries and additional 23

affiliates nationwide. In the week-long holidays from May 1, Guomei launched another 12 retail outlets in large cities like Xi'an and Zhengzhou. Meanwhile, Suning declared its ambitious plan to establish 1,500 affiliates within the next three years. It is estimated that the annual sales volume of the country's electrical home appliance market is hundreds of billions of yuan, which whets the appetites of these giants for a further expansion of their market shares.

"Even though we can not yet give a timetable for the merger initiative, we strongly believe that such a merger is with the developing tendency in China's market," said Mr. He Ju, deputy general manager of Guomei. "With the globalization wave sweeping the world, domestic retailing enterprises have to join up with foreign counterparts who have more capitals and marketing skills. The sooner, the better, particularly with China enter-

ing the World Trade Organization (WTO)."

"Further more, those famous foreign retail giants are much stronger and more sophisticated. For instance, Bestbuy, the largest electrical home appliances retailer in U.S. has an annual sales volume over \$8 billion. Big foreign retailers have a great deal to offer in terms of management framework, staff training, commodity structure, advertisement promoting and so on."

But sources from the highest level of the management group of Guomei emphasized that the contact is still in the very preliminary stage. Analysts believe that due to the differences of cultures, consuming concepts and structures of commodities for sale, most of the experienced foreign retail companies will be quite cautious about entering the market here. Instead, they will more likely cooperate by using the famous brand and retailing networks of Guomei.

No Investment to Be Invited at Expense of Low Land Price

State-owned real estate will not be sold cheaply simply to lure investment, according to China's Ministry of Land Resources.

"The phenomenon of renting land-use right at low prices to lure investment has become a thing of the past. State-owned real estate is the most valuable part of the state's assets," said Hu Cunzhi, director of the Land Management Department of the ministry.

The official said that the ministry is urging all the city- and county-level governments to finish the formulation of standard local land prices, or the lowest local land price criteria, before the beginning of 2002.

After the criteria are made public, any dealings at lower prices shall be blocked, said the official.

The ministry has urged that all the state-owned real estate viable for commercial development should be transferred in the form of public bidding or auction. Market transactions only cover five percent of the total land deals at present; most state-owned land transfer deals are approved behind scenes.

If local governments want to attract investors with preferential policies, they can use government financing to subsidize the loss of taxation brought by preferential investment clauses rather than by sacrificing state real estate, Hu stressed.

(Xinhua)

Health-Care Culture for Health-Care Industry

By Jian Rong/Zhao Hongyi

Health-care has a long history in China. In fact, health-care is more of a culture than an industry. With the economic development of the country, Chinese people want to gain a better understanding of foreign health-care industry and introduce their own unique health-care culture to the world. That is also the purpose of the second China International Health-Care Festival to be held in October 18-22, 2001, in Kunming, the capital city of Yunnan Province.

"Traditional Chinese medical science and medicines, as well as Chinese health-care culture, have made an outstanding contribution to the survival and increase of human kind. Fortunately, the long history of Chinese medicinal science has continued to the present day with little interruption. Since China opened up to the world, increasing interest and attention from outside have focused on this heritage, which is important to the development of pharmaceuticals and health-care for the whole world," said an official from the organizing committee to media reporters the other day in Beijing.

"With the living standards and income increasing, China's health-care industry needs further development. The second China International Health-Care Festival will be a great opportunity for Chinese and foreign entrepreneurs to discuss possible cooperation in this industry and market," the official said.

According to the festival programs prepared by the committee, three forums will also be held in October. The theme forum will focus on macro economic development strategies for the industry in China and in the world as a whole. The professional forum will deal with academic and professional issues. The industrial forum will discuss possible applied uses of health-care science and culture for the industry and market development in China and the world.

Green Offices to Cut Waste

By Su Wei

Little things such as using both sides of a piece of paper, turning off the air-conditioner when leaving, and using recycled stationery will be regarded as environmental protection standards in the public offices of all government departments and bureaus in Beijing.

Prior to June 5th, the World Environment Day, the Publication and Education Center of the National Environmental Protection Bureau requested that public sector offices initiate such standards in response to calls by the National People's Environmental and Capital Committee, the Central Youth League, the National Women's Association and other groups.

Last year, the Publication and Education Center of National Environmental Protection Head Bureau, together with the National Workers Union, the Central League Party and Beijing Municipal government carried out public appraisals of the Environmental Star. In one of the activities, five work units collected 6 tons of office paper, newspaper and packing paper for recycling in a short time. Meanwhile, the local governments of Beijing's eight districts also adopted the use of recyclable paper, which has led to a rising of the public's

awareness on environmental protection.

According to Mr. Chen Yao, an engineer and organizer at the Center, there is an enormous amount of wastage of resources in offices. Based on a survey carried out by the center, one water cooler operating in an office during a 24-hour period consumes 2 kwh electricity. The waste caused by leaving computers and air-conditioners running, as well as dripping taps is usually ignored. Chen Yao says the concept of green offices is aimed at making employees in public officers more aware of such issues.

The specific requirements for green offices are as follows:

The temperature of an office should be maintained at 24 degrees centigrade. Plain paper fax machines should be used rather than the heat sensitive type, in order to reduce the frequent use of duplicator. E-mails should be used in favor of printing, where possible, and when printing is necessary, both sides of the paper should be used. Disposable stationery and tableware are forbidden. Noise levels should be reduced, the work environment kept clean and taps must not be left running after use.

So far, the establishment of green offices has already been carried out at the National Information Center, the China Science and Technology Museum, Beijing University and Beijing Normal University.

Children Create Scrap Battery Map



Photo Provided by Wang Changqing

By Su Nan

Using 80,000 scrap batteries, and taking 6 months to complete, a group of Beijing children have created a giant world map. 2 meters high, 3 meters long, and weighing nearly 3 tons, this unique world map went on exhibition in Wangfujing Street on Children's day, and can be seen at the Jinsong Price Smart store from June 4th to 10th.

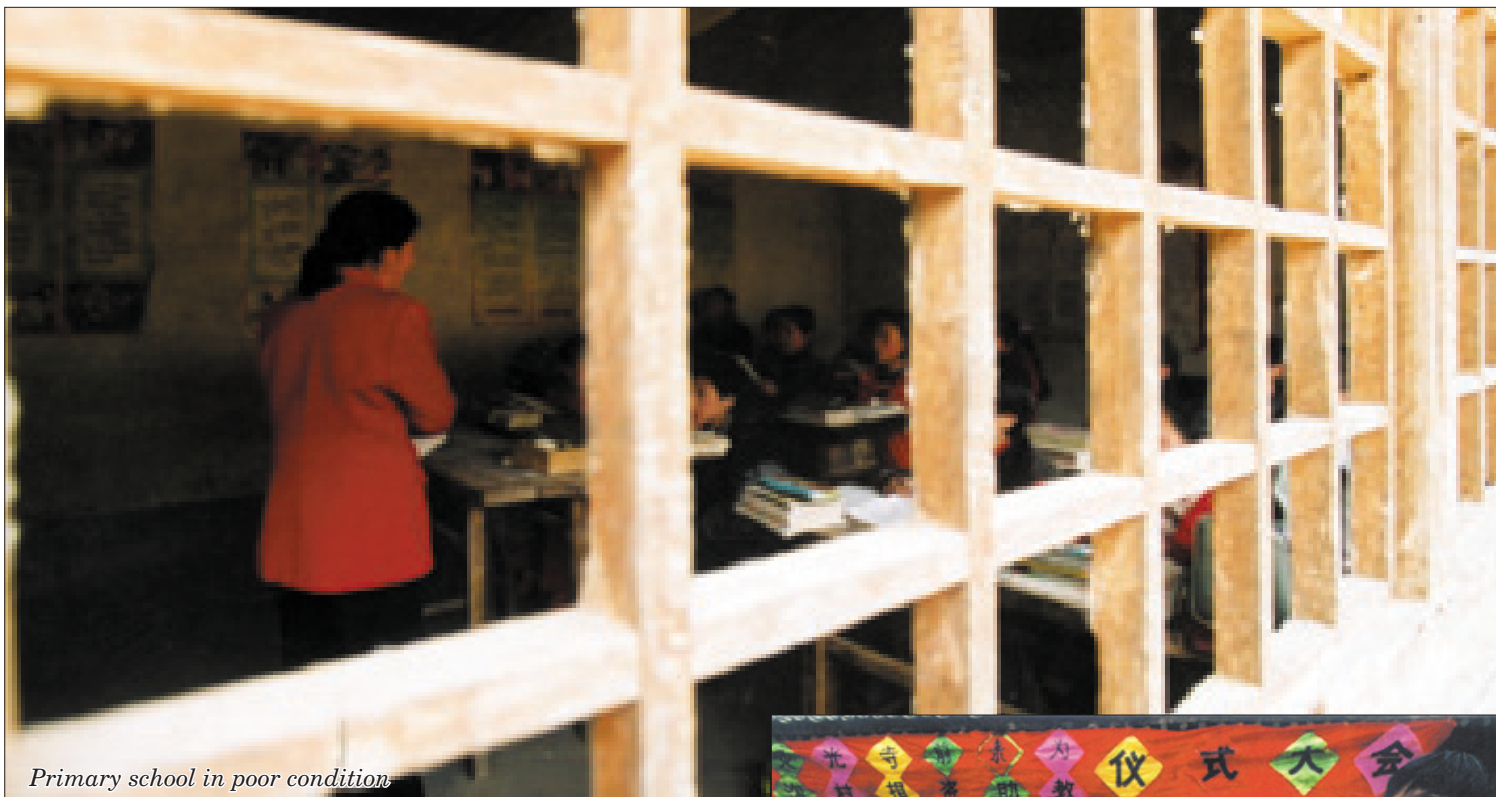
The initiator of the activity is a 7-year-old primary school student, Wang Junjing. She has collect 100,000 scrap batteries since she was 5, establishing a new Guinness World Record. "My dad told me that, 1 scrap battery might pollute 600,000 liters of water, so I started collecting scrap batteries so as to protect our environment," she told reporters.

In January this year, at the suggestion of Wang Junjing and with the support of various companies, more than 20,000 children started to collect scrap batteries and participated in

the activity of creating the world map. They hope by doing so to raise people's awareness about environmental protection and the harmfulness of scrap batteries, and support Beijing's Olympic bid. "I hope that more people can get involved in protecting the environment with us, not only in China, but all over the world." Says Liu Che, a primary school student, and participant in the activity.

During the exhibition in Wangfujing Street, the world map attracted and amazed many people. Ms. Zhang, there with her daughter, told reporters in front of the world map, "It's a wonderful thing to educate children about the importance of environmental protection when they are still young, and I hope it may well continue in the future."

Wang Junjing made her own appeal to the public, saying "I hope all my little friends may participate in the activity of environmental protection, so the world will become clean, and the sky will show its blue!"



Primary school in poor condition

Buddhist Masters of Law Donate to Build Primary School

By Su Wei

Two young Buddhist monks, at Lingguan Monastery in Beijing's Western Hills, have donated 10,000 yuan to build a primary school in Dadaogou Village, Laiyuan County, Hebei Province as a part of Project Hope.

On the morning of May 16th, Chang Zang, Master of Law and Buddhist abbot of Lingguang Monastery, was told by one of the lay Buddhists about an article he had read in Beijing Youth daily. The article said that a primary school in Hebei's Taihang Mountain was in danger of collapsing and it was unsafe for the students to continue classes in such a building. Chang Zang suggested to another Master of Law, Chang Chan that they donate 10,000 yuan to the village for a new primary school for the stu-

dents. With the approval of the President of the Buddhist Association of China, they immediately got in touch with the author of the article and carried out their plan.

On May 23rd, the two Buddhist Masters went to the location of the primary school in Dadaogou, and presented 10,000 yuan in cash to the village. When they arrived at the village they were shocked at the poor condition of the primary school. The classroom looked as if a gust of wind could topple it. Without a second thought, the two monks decided to not only donate money to reconstruct the school, but also to provide one pair of shoes for each student, as well as desks, chairs, computers and televisions when the new primary school was completed. Upon hearing of another primary school in the county in a sim-



Donation Ceremony

Photos by Mi Li

ilar condition, Master Chang Zang said another 10,000 yuan would be donated soon.

The villagers and county leaders were moved. They asked if they could do anything for the monastery. The two replied that they needed nothing and what they really wanted was to build a new primary school with a high construction quality.

When asked what made them so quickly donate the money, they replied that according to the will of the former Abbot of Lingguang Monastery, who passed away in 1999, the remaining donations accumulated by him should be used in helping orphans and the Project Hope as well. The Masters of Lingguang Monastery have been longing to realize the will of the former Abbot.

The two monks both renounced family life when they

were young and have taken the Buddhist creed 'Benevolence and Benefiting Mankind' to heart. They say they often bear in mind that they shall repay their gratitude to their parents, to the masses, to society and the country. Every year, Lingguan Monastery donates more than 2 million yuan in buying captive fish and birds and setting them free, providing relief to people in disaster areas, making donations to the Project Hope, and providing welfare to disabled children. All of the donations are from the savings of the monks in the monastery and Buddhist believers. When Master Chang Zang was asked about his plans for the future, he smiled and murmured, "I have no clear idea. But all of the masters in our monastery are doing what we can to repay our gratitude to society."

Reading in the New Capital Library



By Xiao Rong

After three years of reconstruction, the new Capital Library opened on May 1 this year, attracting over 15,000 readers in the first week. Founded in 1913 by the Educational Department of the KMT government, the Capital Library has amassed an abundant collection of books in its 88-year history, mainly from governmental allocation, donations and purchases. There are over 27,000,000 books in the collection, including over 300 thousand foreign language books and periodicals. In order

to provide some information to those foreign readers who are interested in learning more about the Capital Library, we interviewed Li Xiaosu, the director of the library's foreign language department.

BT (Beijing Today): For a foreigner or a Chinese who wants to borrow books from the library, is it necessary to have a borrowing card?

Li (Li Xiaosu): Borrowers must have a card. Anyone over the age of 13 can apply for a card, with his or her ID card or passport. There will be a 100-yuan deposit and 25 yuan charge for a standard borrowing card.

BT: How many reading rooms are there now in the Capital Library?

Li: There are now altogether 13 reading rooms, including the children's reading room and the Beijing local documents reading room, which are the features of our library. And we are going to open a new reading room for foreign language periodicals which will feature various paintings and photos.

BT: Can foreigners ask the library staff to engage in research for them?

Li: No problem. Those people not so fluent in Chinese can ask us to help them find documents.

BT: Will you hold certain lectures sometimes?

Li: Before moving to the new site, academic reports were regularly held in the Directorate of the Imperial Academy; our former location. So similar lectures will still be held in the new library. In addition, we are now contacting embassies in Beijing to jointly hold some cultural activities in the near future.

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To celebrate 250th anniversary of Moscow University, a delegation headed by Rector Sadovnich came to Beijing University to hold some exchange activities. Rector Sadovnich told correspondents that he was deeply impressed by the Chinese government's great support for education.

By Cindy

Night Curio Market Waiting to boom

By Xiao Rong

The Yabao Road Branch of the Beijing Curio City, which opened in April, is now open until 8:30 pm, as of June 1.

Programs staged by the Beijing Curio City art ensemble will also be offered at 7:30pm from Friday to Sunday, according to Wang Jinzhan, manager of the Yabao Road Curio City. "The programs are mainly shows of traditional clothing in China. Also, ancient musical instruments will be played. In this way, we hope more and more customers will be attracted to the curio city", he said. "Although extending the opening times hasn't brought the expected increase to our business, we are still confident that our curio city will make a name for it-

self sooner or later," Wang added. "The reason we used the name of 'Beijing Curio City' is that it has become a famous brand after so many years. It's true we are now not well known to most foreigners, but we have the advantage of being close to the embassy area in Beijing. And our curio city opens from Monday through Sunday, while the Beijing Curio City in Panjiayuan only opens on weekends. So, by extending our opening time until 8:30pm, foreigners can stroll to our market after supper on any workday. Since the night market began on June 1, the volume of trade of the curio city has reached almost 20 thousand yuan in three days. Up till now, there are over 90 stalls in the Yabao Road Curio City, 40% of which are branches of those at the Panjiayuan market."

Developed countries use the education import as a resource for stimulating their economies —

The United States receives the largest number of overseas students. According to statistics, the annual revenue from overseas students stands at \$3.35 billion.

Tuition fees paid by overseas students form the major income of British universities, which account for 5-16% of universities' total revenue.

About 100,000 foreign students came to Canada, bringing an economic value of CA\$2.5 billion.

Education programs are one

of the top 10 exports for Australia. China ranks fourth.

The New Zealand government is projected to issue a total 65,550 visas to students from the Chinese mainland by 2005.

The Japanese government plans to increase its overseas students up to 100,000 in the coming decade.

Studying Abroad: Right Move?

By Ivy Zhang

In this situation, what should be the correct response for Chinese people? Do they approve or disapprove of the trend?

Ms. Xu, 24
HP Finance Department

Prior to the summer vacation of my second year at university, probably 1997, a friend and I applied for a short-term course organized by a British International Language School. This English language training course was supposed to last a month. If enrolled after evaluation and payment of about RMB 20,000 -- tuition fee, accommodation and food included without travel expenses -- these students would take English classes at a university in the morning and travel around in the afternoon. At night, they could choose to stay at a local family or share a dorm room with one of their classmates. However, after con-

sidering the relatively high cost for an average Chinese family and inside information that revealed the agent's business scope did not include service for Chinese students, we finally quit.

Ms. Dong, 55, Retired.
Former marketing director of Bell-South Jitong.

In China, although the number of enrolled college students has been on the increase in recent years, the competition for higher education among high school graduates remains harsh. Supply still exceeds demand. Many young men who are willing to study at universities are denied access due to limited enrollment. Thus many families turn to exploring ways of sending their children abroad for further study on the condition that they have sufficient financial strength. I can give you an example: One of my neighbors, a lady who works at the Bank of China and is based in Thailand, sent her son to Canada a few years ago. You

know what? When in China, this boy failed to obtain a graduation certificate from a local junior high school, never mind college. Since the family is quite rich, the mother sent him to Canada. In my case, I have a 24-year-old daughter for whom my husband and I will not make any decisions. We respect her own choices. To go abroad is not a goal in itself, but a means of self-improvement.

Dr. Lu, 29, International & Comparative education Research Institute of Beijing Normal University

Regarding the phenomenon of Chinese students going abroad to study, I'd like to comment from two perspectives - voluntary and involuntary students.

First, voluntary students refer to those who go abroad to pursue higher degrees, master's or doctorate degrees, at their own expense. This trend is inevitable and likely to continue in China. As the world goes global, it is sure

to benefit the cultural, technological and educational exchanges between trading countries. However, a significant imbalance exists in the import and export of human talent, and the brain drain borne by the export country is much higher than the benefits gained by the import country. This is unfair and unjust transaction in talents. It is not surprising for people to say China's Silicon Valley has moved abroad with the fast outflow of IT or computer specialists. Brain drain is actually the exploitation of talent from a developing country by a developed country as it costs the exporting country much to educate and nurture a talent, especially basic education.

Second, by involuntary students, I mean the middle school students or students from private schools who go abroad, say Britain or Australia. Their choice of going abroad is mostly driven by the market. On the one hand, it is helpful for these children to expand their horizons and gain a world perspective. On the other hand, most parents who send their children abroad just follow the trend blindly. When making decisions, they might not know what benefit a foreign education can do for their children, what their children can really learn from going abroad, or whether the children can successfully adapt themselves to the new environment. As for teenagers, they are in the process of forming their own life values and are likely to get lost spiritually while facing an immense culture shock. Some even take drugs or commit crimes. So I think the disadvantages outweigh the advantages for these students.

In short, whether or not to go abroad to study depends on adaptability and a solid cultural foundation. Minor problems would occur for voluntary students, but major problems can occur for involuntary ones.

SOUND BITES

Donald Tsang

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's chief secretary for administration

Business in the mainland holds great appeal and Hong Kong is still an ideal location for catching the chances to develop the internal business, said Donald Tsang, during his speech at the anniversary meeting of the International Finance Academy.

He said, in the past 20 years, Hong Kong has not only contributed to the modern construction of the mainland, but also gained benefits from it. With the entry into the WTO and the large-scale development in western China, it can be predicted in the following 10 years that the turnover of both China's foreign trade and the direct foreign investment in mainland China will be doubled.

Zhang Chunjiang

Vice-minister of Information Industry

An open debate must be encouraged on the public interest policies, especially the telecommunication policies, by which the public interest policies would be well identified by society.

Zhang said in order to healthily promote China Telecom and deepen the reforms, we welcome more high-quality open debates. After a full and frank exchange of ideas between all sides, those policies would be more scientific and reasonable, and better reflect the views of the public.

He also frankly said that because the telecommunication policy directly affects almost every family, if handled correctly, it will enhance public welfare, otherwise the interests of ordinary people will be harmed.

Wei Jiafu

President of China Ocean Shipping Company

Wei delivered a speech on Chinese state-owned enterprise reforms at the Business School of Harvard University and the Fairbank Center on May 29.

Wei said, "20 years' state-owned enterprise reforms in China has fully proven that state-owned enterprises will do well as long as the principle of "clarified property, definite responsibility, departure of government and scientific management" is followed to build a modern enterprise."



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Beijing Football Fans Have Their Say



There's more to football than just football.

Picture by Lao du
Table by Tian Ye

By Wei Feng

How well did the Chinese football team perform in the first round of the qualifying tournament for the World Cup? How will it perform in the second round, given its 'best possible draw'? Is head coach Bora Milutinovic qualified for the job?

Data Sea Market Probe Company has conducted a survey of 205 fans in Beijing. All those questioned watched at least 3 of the first round qualifying matches, either live or a taped-replay. The average age of those surveyed was 37 years old.

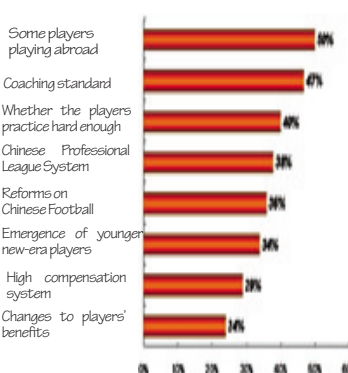
Past the first hurdle

The Chinese football team has made it into the second round of the qualifying tournament, along with 9 other Asian teams, without losing a game. But what do the fans think about the team's standard of playing?

Even though the team won six victories, the victories are seen as low in quality. It is certainly good to win games, but simply winning is not enough, as far as Beijing fans are concerned.

Which were the best and worst

What factors affect the Chinese National Team's standard?



games? According to the survey, the fans thought the best match was that played against the Indonesian team in Jakarta, while the worst was the game in the Maldives. The fans didn't make these judgments according to the final scores, although obviously this is an important aspect. They were concerned more with the specific skills and tactics displayed by the players, how hard they tried, and how the players took advantage of scoring chances.

The change in the performance of the team as a whole must have been affected by many different elements, but what were the chief causes?

Half the fans believed the main factor was that some players had gained experience playing overseas, while other factors, such as the influence of Milutinovic, the head coach, and the players' training involvement were also important. Only a quarter thought that changed benefits for the national football team was the key factor. Those who considered the team to be worse than it was last year, thought the affecting elements were a lack of professional spirit, the players' poor ideological and psychological attitude and the coach failing to pick the best players.

Yang Chen No.1

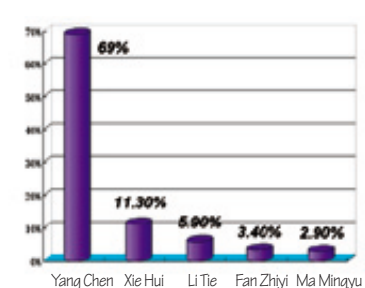
Yang Chen was praised as the 'spiritual leader' of the team. During the game against Indonesia in Kunming, after suffering a shoulder injury, Yang Chen scored a goal in spite of the risk of further injury and continued

to play for some time. His struggling spirit encouraged his teammates and was regarded as the key factor in turning defeat into victory. As to who played best during the qualifying games, Yang Chen won the most votes, with 69%, while Xie Hui was rated second best and Li Tie third.

What are China's chances of qualifying?

More than half the fans believed that poor 'spiritual status' and psychological attitude were the principal obstacles to qualifying for a berth in the World Cup. As to Milutinovic's choice of players and his coaching abil-

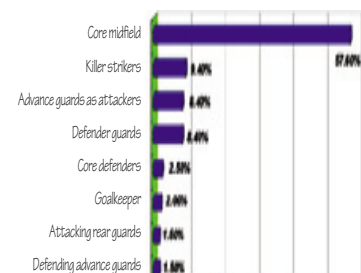
Which player performed the best in the preliminary matches?



ity, most fans expressed a positive attitude; less than a quarter thought these two were the main obstacles. What kinds of players are most urgently needed in the Chinese football team?

Over half of the fans said the team lacked key centers, more than any other position. This was the greatest concern for the majority of the fans.

What position does the Chinese National Squad lack the most?



Milu can't go and Haidong must remain

Hao Haidong's recent 'severe criticisms' have elicited strong responses from different sides and parties. Is it time that Milutinovic was laid off? How do the fans evaluate the coach? Let's answer the question again by means of points. If 10 points represent Milutinovic's unquestioned qualification for the position of chief coach and 0 points means he should pack his bags, he scored 7.45, a fairly resounding vote of confidence. More than a quarter gave him 8 points or above, while less than 4% gave him under 4 points. Similarly, 59% of the fans regarded him as a good coach and 70% disagreed with the statement "Milutinovic's has a poor training ability". 83% fans disagreed that "it is time to change for a new coach".

Certainly the fans don't worship him blindly. To the statement "Milu has coached 4 national football teams to enter the world cup, so he must succeed in getting the Chinese team there," only 18% agreed, while nearly half said "not necessarily".

On the question of "can a Chinese coach take Milutinovic's position?" about one-third said no. But of those who believed he should be replaced, half thought the best candidate was Shen Xiangfu, and 30% thought it was Jin Zhiyang.

As the commander of a football team, the role and influence of the chief coach is crucial, and his ability is always the source of hot debate. So what are the attributes the head coach of a national football team should possess?

According to the survey, more than 80% of fans thought the ability to cooperate with the players, the ability to direct the game, the ability to teach advanced skills and tactics and the best psychological accomplishment were the most important qualities. The fame or reputation is not so critical to the position.

Citizens Increasingly Satisfied With Hong Kong Government

According to the latest public opinion poll, Hong Kong citizens are more satisfied with the Hong Kong SAR government and people are more confident in Hong Kong's future.

Xinhua reports that the poll, taken between May 14th and May 18th questioned 1526 citizens. Compared with a similar poll taken two months ago, Hong Kong citizens' satisfaction rate with the Hong Kong SAR government is up 1%, while their satisfaction rate for the service of government officials and Hong Kong's prosperity and stability in the future are up 2%.

Survey Shows Kids 'Bored' by Their Parents

What bores children the most, and according to children, what interests their parents the most?

To the question "what is the most boring thing in the family?" 49% of children answered "parents' nagging"; 20% said "parents playing cards or mah-jong"; 19% said "not being allowed to play outside alone or have friends over to play"; 15% said "their parents' smoking or drinking"; and 14% said "parents asking them to do more homework".

As to what children believe their parents care most about? 70% said their parents "don't care at all about them." 64% said what their parents most cared about was achievements in studying. Health condition rated just 30%, eating 12%, and clothing only 5%.

Survey Reveals Primary School "Supporting Fees" Over College Tuitions

The 'supporting fees' for choosing a school or a kindergarten outside one's residential district has become a hot social issue.

The survey implied that among the parents whose children were from 3 to 12 years old, 32.6% of them had paid such fees, in which the highest rate was in Beijing, at 60%. The lowest rate was in Guangzhou, at 21.8%. The average yearly fees for supporting kindergartens' were up to 1,980 yuan, or twice the average salary of a Chinese employee.

Primary school support fees were also surprisingly high. In Beijing, 50.8% of pupils' parents had paid such fees, and the average amount in the last year was 4767 yuan, equivalent to a year's tuition for a college student.

(Wei Feng)

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Introduction

J.H. Law office was established in May, 1997 with the proper approval of the Chinese Judicial Authorities. The firm is specialized in the areas of finance, capital investment, corporate affairs, real estate, commercial and labor arbitrations (foreign and domestics) and participates also in the legal aspects of large projects calling for tender or bid tendering. J.H. Law Office is operated in a system of partnership and offers a whole range of consultative and legal services.

J.H. Law office puts strong emphasis on internal co — operation and on our staffs acting responsibly to our clients as well as to each others with each and every job until it is satisfactorily done. We are, therefore, able to assemble a group of lawyers who are not only from universities of fame, but also very experienced and professional. At present, the business at J.H. Law office is divided roughly into these departments, namely: Finance, Capital Investment, Real Estate, Corporate Affairs, Labor and Insurance, Stock and bond, Research — Training and Social Investigation. Each department is staffed with qualified lawyers specialized in the field.

Our aim at J.H. Law office is: to defend the rights of our clients as if they were our own, and to carry out our services with a high sense of responsibility, a strong feeling of mission and professionalism.



More than 400 Chinese enterprises were cheated by this fake FDA certificate.
Photo by Lu Jian

Hundreds of Enterprises Cheated by the "FDA Intermediary"



Charles/Barter Consultant (BCBC) is suspected of cheating more than 400 Chinese medicine firms by pretending to obtain FDA certification from the United States. The company allegedly swindled several million US dollars out of these Chinese enterprises.

Beijing Charles/Barter Consultant allegedly pretended to act as an intermediary. Its Chinese introduction says, "By November 2000, we successfully helped more than 400 enterprises obtain FDA certification for 500 famous and excellent traditional Chinese medicines and health-care medicines, 95 percent of all traditional Chinese medicines certified by the FDA."

A journalist estimated the company earned a total US\$5 million based on the lowest price of US\$10,000 each.

The firm appears to have preyed on these enterprises' confused understanding of the FDA and its policies. The lesson they learnt is not only economic. Later, these enterprises sought compensation from Beijing Charles/Barter Consultant. Industrial and commercial departments in Beijing began to study the case.

On May 25, President U. Buttle of Beijing Charles/Barter Consultant came to the Nakang Company to make an apology. He also wrote a self-criticism and promised to make up for the damage he brought to those Chinese companies.

"All traditional Chinese medicines sold as food supplements don't need to get approval from the FDA," said Zheng Yanpeng, an adviser on Chinese over-the-counter medicines. "As long as they satisfy health requirements and don't contain any toxicity."

"Beijing Charles/Barter Consultant cheated these enterprises by making use of their lack of good understanding about the laws and regulations of foreign countries. State medical departments have a duty to help these domestic enterprises study and understand laws and policies of foreign countries to avoid a reoccurrence of such cases."

Text and photos by reporter Li Xin and student journalist Lu Jian

By Li Xin
Wei Tong

FDA Blocks Chinese Medicine Entering US Market?

Chinese knowledge of the role and regulations of the FDA remains partial and in their attempts to engage the American legal system, many Chinese enterprises have suffered one setback after another.

Is the FDA untouchable? Does the FDA's bureaucratic exterior mask a more subtle intention to prevent Chinese medical enterprises from gaining a market foothold?

Or do China's practices, institutions and regulations lag too far behind the international practice? The following three FDA cases supply some enlightenment.



Duan Zhengwen

Chinese Medical Laws Offend FDA

Bio-tech manufacturer Xuezhikang sued the FDA four years ago in March 2001 over a US\$2 billion contract. In an earlier judgment, the Chinese manufacturer won the lawsuit and so exported 100 tons of medicine that year.

Although the Chinese manufacturer eventually lost the lawsuit, WBL Beijing University Biotech is protected by its contract. If the US agent failed to sell the product locally, WBL would receive US\$1.6 million compensation.

Strictly speaking, this is a lawsuit between the US agent and the FDA concerning raw materials for the product. The medicine is one of the main products of WBL. It contains all the criteria necessary for modern traditional Chinese medicine.

First, its effective ingredients are clear and the curative effect is remarkable and stable. Second, it is safe. The raw material is natural, without any chemicals. Third, it is produced strictly according to quality control standards.

Clinical practice in the United States also showed two months after taking the medicine, patients found their low-density protein cholesterol (or bad cholesterol) decreased 15 percent on average. An authoritative paper says its successful sale in the United States was good news for 57 million patients suffering hyperlipidemia in the country.

In September 1996, WBL and the US Time Health Corp. concluded a contract. According to the contract, WBL should provide US\$2 billion raw materials — a rice fermented with red yeast -- in 20 years to the US Time Health Corp.

With the raw materials, the US company could produce Cholestin capsules. As a food supplement, the product should enter some 30,000 chain stores. This was the largest export trade of traditional Chinese medicine at that time.

Appreciated as a good example of the benefits of traditional Chinese medicines, the medicine could only be exported to the United States in the form of raw materials under the label "food supplement".

In 1994, the United States passed a law on health education of diet supplements. Since then, traditional Chinese medicines have entered the US market as diet supplements and traditional Chinese medicines are sold as food supplements. In this way, it is impossible to make clear their suitability.

Nor can the medicines contain any of the necessary toxicity traditional Chinese medicine usually contains. The ingredients of the medicine are also fewer, making them less effective and healthy.

Price is restricted and market sales cannot increase. But the market is nonetheless important as the United States accounts for 30 percent of world medical consumption.

Clinical practitioners, patients and US vendors rate Xuezhikang highly. But the product has to bypass the FDA by being sold as a food supplement. A Chinese company cannot avoid the conflicting laws of two very different countries. It is time to seriously examine means of entry into the international market for traditional Chinese medicines.



Li Jiansheng

Suspected Plagiarism by FDA Official

But taking on the United States FDA still looks a tall order to most enterprises. One case of alleged plagiarism of a Chinese medicine in the United States came about

precisely because of the high barriers and the hunger of Chinese medical enterprises for the US market.

"The losses are worth the costs of building 10 Chinese science and technology halls," according to 21st Century Economic Reports.

Li Jiansheng, chairman of Beijing Fresh Medicine Research and Manufacturing Center under the Chinese Cancer Fund and president and manager of Beijing Jiansheng Pharmaceuticals, was depressed at the news he heard on May 10.

The FDA approved clinical trials of an epoch-making new cancer medicine by a US company, Novartis. Li suspects this medicine copied active ingredients of a traditional Chinese medicine he had developed. Li estimates 2 billion yuan losses.

The case involves a cancer-fighting medicine, the Golden Dragon capsule. The medicine is a fourth generation anti-cancer medicine approved by China's Ministry of Health. Li, a military doctor, says he spent two decades on its development.

Back in May 1999, Nada Zein, an expert in genetic engineering from the US Food and Drug Administration, came to Beijing to discuss cooperation possibilities with Li.

"If possible, the two sides can discuss how to popularize it on the US market," Li said he was told the unexpected visit excited him.

Trusting Zein, Li says he gave her 300 grams of the semi-finished medicine with an oral contract. Zein took it back and extracted the active ingredients for study immediately after returning to her country.

She allegedly called Li and told him, "I have discovered powerful active ingredients, with a strong effect. They kill all the cancer cells. It is really inconceivable."

Li says he was overjoyed. Immediately, Li entrusted his daughter Li Huizhen, who was studying in the United States, to contact Zein in an attempt to realize a blueprint he and Zein could draw up for developing its market in the United States.

On November 11, 1999, Zein sent a fax to Li's daughter. "I made a series of experiments with two cells using the medicine Li gave to me. The experiments prove that this medicine of a quite low density demonstrates very strong role in fighting cancers."

She asked again for Li to provide more detailed data of his clinical practice. But Li supplied nothing.

Zein contacted Li directly and asked Li to visit the United States and "sign a secret but useful agreement" with her.

"You must understand the GNF an FDA department is a basic research institute and unable to conduct clinical practice," Li says she said. "Also it is difficult to commercialize a product in the United States."

"But the GNF has close relations with the Novartis Company. If our GNF test achieves some significant results, Novartis Company may be interested in getting a commercial licence."

On March 1, 2001, Zein published an article in the Wall Street Journal. In it, she talked about the medical mechanism of a "clever" anti-cancer medicine — Gleevec, which is to be developed soon by Novartis. She also says "this new medicine will provide a new mode for curing cancers in the future."

After reading the article, Li says he discovered the medical mechanism of Gleevec was the same as with the Golden Dragon capsule.

But the answer from the Novartis Company is clear.

"This is absolutely impossible. Gleevec is an orphan medicine approved by the FDA. It is unparalleled. It is used to cure chronic particle cell leukemia, with a very small incidence of one per 200,000 people."

"The Novartis Company has put a huge investment into its research and development. Its experiments were finished in Europe. It took such a short period of time for its development because we have mastered the advanced technology and equipment."

Doctor He Maochun, director of the Legal Department of International Economic and Trade Research Institute under the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation, knows quite well about the legal affairs related with intellectual property involving foreign countries. He believes the Golden Dragon capsule case is in fact quite common.



Photo by Jia Ting

By Zhu Lin

At first sight, it was hard to recognize Zhang Youdai as a DJ in tune with the latest beat of international music trends. Now 34 years old, he's been a DJ in the music channel of Beijing Radio Station for eleven years. As the heat of a hot summer evening was reluctantly fading, Zhang walked into a small bar in Sanlitun Street in a natural and quiet manner in contrast with the noise around.

He's got a suntanned face, slim figure, and a slightly shy expression, dressed in a fashionable but introvert style. But as soon as the conversation turned to music, passion and confidence sparkled in his eyes. While talking about his job, he said-

"God is a DJ"

"If one day, I am not moved by the music I play to my listeners, I must not stay in this profession any more," Zhang affirmed. Once at a party, a girl said to him, "I find your voice on the radio so attractive." But Zhang replied, "That's because I'm touched by the beautiful music I'm playing. Together with such touching music, how can my voice sound bad?"

On his radio programme, Zhang never says anything irrelevant. Music is the controller at that time. It orders him what to say. If the music permits him to make some comments, he does so; if the music asks him to shut up, he just keeps silent.



Comfortable at home

Photo by Cui Jun

One of his favorite songs is a British one named "God is a DJ". According to Zhang, in China, the desire for music is not as urgent as that for air and water, but in fact, the need for music is indeed as urgent as air and water. Just like the Bible says, "Air is good, so there is air; water is good, so there is water." "That's a DJ's job," Zhang said, "Music is good, so there is music."

As a DJ, Zhang feels like a prophet. When he plays a CD to the listeners, they enjoy it. But during this time, he is thinking about the next CD. A DJ is always at least one step ahead of the listeners, always leading them forward, hunting for something new.

"Beijing Opera was Rock Music for Me"

Zhang started to enjoy music at the age of three in 1970. At that time, people had very little entertainment. The radio would broadcast nothing but Beijing operas on revolutionary topics (Yang Ban Xi). Zhang learned many Beijing operas by heart. He was often asked to perform in the factory where his mother worked. The audience would burst out laughing on hearing his childish singing. In the following five years or so, revolutionary Beijing operas were the only music available to him.

Recalling that period of time, Zhang paused for a while and lowered his head slightly, "Now I understand that revolutionary Beijing Opera was rock music for me at that time; that's when I realized how much I needed music."

When he was in the first year of middle school, the first FM radio channel appeared in Beijing. Every afternoon there was a classical music programme. Through that, Zhang got to know Beethoven and Mozart's music. His hobby was unusual among his classmates, and they wondered why he preferred to listen to classical music. But ever since 1980s, people have tried to show off their sophistication by knowing about classical music. The reason he chose classical music was that he had a strong desire to rebel, "When the people around

recalled, "And the wires of the earphones got tangled together." He waved his hands imitating the tangled mess of the situation. Without any knowledge about rock music, he was sure that was the sound he wanted. From then on, he started to collect rock music CDs, and now he collects all kinds of music. In high school, he had a lot of tapes but didn't have enough money to buy CDs. He complained to himself, "When will my CDs be as many as my tapes?" Now Zhang has almost 3,000 CDs and at least 700 bakelite discs. That's really his fortune. Today he can speak without hesitation that he's listened to more music than anyone else. He never considers buying CDs as having anything to do with financial problems. As long as he thinks the CD is good, he won't hesitate to buy it. Some of his friends wonder where he finds so

closed heart.

Zhang is sorry for those people. He confirms it's just a matter of choice whether you listen to Mozart or Heavy Metal. For example, now he likes electronic music. Many people criticize that it lacks humanity. But Zhang disagrees. "If you can make a lifeless machine full of life, you're successful. Guitar is a machine too, but it is the guitar player who brings it to life." In the 1990s, people had the urge to keep up with the future, with high technology. It's like paying for the future in advance. So it's natural for them to try their hand in the field of music, combining science together with it.

DJ is a Postman

The Russian composer Borodin used to say, "People consider me a great composer. But in my mind, I'm just a postman. My job is sending messages to people through my music." Zhang approves of his words. He also regards himself as a postman. For him, good music must carry a message with it. "The best thing about my job," he said, "is that I can send positive messages through great music straight to people's hearts."

Zhang is not only a postman, but also a happy postman. As his good friend, Xiao Weng understands



People enjoy Youdai's music

Photo by Jia Ting

Zhang's life, "His happiness might not be understood by other people, but he knows he's happy because of music."

It's not important what Zhang is doing. No matter whether he's choosing a piece of music for his "New Rock Magazine", or chatting with his friends, music accompanies him, and nothing else is more important. Many things can change the world, but Zhang is convinced that the world won't change because society gets richer, or has more advanced technology. Only when every individual has changed, the world can change. And music is the very thing that can change every individual. That's why each time at the end of his program, he will say, "I believe music can change the world."

① Youdai is jading music

② Two Youdais together

③ Youdai with his fortune

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me weren't familiar with classical music, I felt proud of being special; but because so many people went after it as a fashion, I just felt like quitting."

Once a world famous symphony orchestra came to perform in Beijing. Classical music fans, including Zhang, queued for the whole night in order to get a ticket. Finally he got one. During the concert, he overheard two people sitting behind him ask, "Beethoven? Who's that, then?" He felt disgusted. People went to the concert not because they loved the music, but because it was a fashion. Zhang hated to go down the same road as fashion. "That's not the sound I want," he thought. So he gave up classical music in search of something new.

"Searching for a New Sound"

At 17 years old, Zhang got to know rock music for the first time in 1985 at the first China International Sound Effect Fair. Squeezed in the crowd lining up to listen to the testing equipment, he was shocked by a piece of rock music he heard through the earphones. He had never heard such a sound before, but he had felt something similar in his mind a long time before. In his imagination, the drum should sound like "this", and the guitar should be played like "this", but he never knew that was the sound of rock music.

"There were so many people around the earphones," Zhang

much money to buy CDs, but he believes that if people don't buy music, it is not through a lack of money, but just because they don't want to. He spends most of his salary on buying CDs, and he never regrets it for a minute. "If people have money to drink at a bar," he took a look at the people around, shrugging, "why can't they spend some on music?"

"Hearts Beat as One"

Zhang has a deep understanding of music. To him, listening to good music is like travelling around through time and space. One can only have one life, but music, as the essence from numerous composers' hearts, can bring you new experiences and feelings a thousand times over. And being a DJ, he takes his listeners travelling through music.

On talking about his job, Zhang's eyes lit up with obvious confidence, "A DJ must be very confident and positive. As long as your heart is open," he assured, waving his hand from his bosom, "I'm sure the music I choose can touch your heart. When I put music out on air, I feel our hearts beat as one." But some people have prejudices against certain kinds of music. Zhang said of course he couldn't touch those people's



Photos by Cui Jun

Zhang Youdai's Journey through Music

Aged 3	sang revolutionary Beijing Operas
5	hummed revolutionary songs
11-13	enjoyed listening to Hong Kong pop singer Deng Lijun
14-15	listened to Lo Tayu's songs
16-17	dreamed of John Denver and Carpenters' songs
18-19	found his voice in the "Beetles"
20-22	fell in love with Rock music and then "Heavy Metal"
24-25	became familiar with Jazz
25-28	played electronic music
Today	listens to and collects all kinds of good music

What Music Have You Listened to Recently?

Just like Chinese daily greeting "Have you eaten", Zhang's friends have the habit of asking him, "What music have you listened to recently?" In the past, this question was easy to answer. He didn't have so many CDs to enjoy, and one could keep him company for a long time. But now, everyday he enjoys more and more music through more and more ways. It's hard to tell which piece he's listening to. Zhang smiled, spreading out his hands, "But my friends are still asking me, 'What music have you listened to recently?'"



Forefinger, a legendary figure in Chinese poetry society, was recently awarded Poetry Prize of People's Literature, the highest honor in Chinese literature, for his remarkable achievements in poetry.

Forefinger's own name is Guo Lusheng. Forefinger's Poems, his newly published poetry edition, is a best seller. High-spirited and full of rich imagination, his poems reflected the inner world of youth and spread throughout the whole country.

Forefinger was diagnosed as schizophrenic and was hospitalized for three months in 1973. The cause of his disease was not clearly known. He has been living in the No.3 Welfare Home in Changping county in Beijing since 1990. Forefinger's major contribution to modern Chinese poetry is infusing it with a spirit of rejuvenation.

This is Eight Past Four in Beijing

This is eight past four in Beijing
Hands waving goodbye like sea waves
This is eight past four in Beijing
A sharp siren is blowing

Tall buildings of Beijing Railway Station
Suddenly shake violently
Shocked, I look out of the window
What has happened, I don't know

Suddenly I feel a pain in my heart
It must be Mom's sewing needle penetrating my heart
Then my heart becomes a kite
With its string at mom's hands

The string is so tight, it's gonna break
I have to stretch my head out of the window
Until then, until that moment
I know what has happened

——The noise of farewell, like wave after wave
Almost sweeps away the station
At my foot, Beijing
Is moving slowly

I wave my arms to Beijing once more
I want to catch her collar
And call out to her dearly
Remember me forever, Beijing, my mom

At last I catch hold of something
No matter whose hand it might be, I won't let it go
Because this is my Beijing
Because this is my last Beijing

(Dec. 20, 1968)

Trust in Future

When cobwebs covered my stove top ruthlessly,
When smoke sighed at poverty sadly,
I still spread out the ash of disappointment insistently and,
Wrote down with beautiful snowflakes: trust in future.

When my purple grapes turned into dewdrops of late autumn,
When my flowers fell into the arms of someone else,
I still used a withered twig insistently and,
Wrote down on the dreary land: trust in future.

I want to point with my finger to waves flowing on the horizon,
I want to hold up with my hands the sea of the sun,
Daybreak is like a warm and pretty pen,
With it, I write down in child's handwriting: trust in future.

The reason why I trust firmly in future,
Is that I believe in the eyes of people——
Whose Eyelash can brush the dust of history,
Whose pupil can look through the writings of times.

No matter how people treat our rotten flesh,
Our depression when going astray, our sadness over failure,
With hot tears and deep sympathy,
Or scornful laughs and bitter irony.

I trust firmly people will surely treat our backbone,
Give our countless search, detours, failure and success,
A warmhearted, objective and fair judgement,
Yes, we are anxiously waiting for their judgement.

Trust in future firmly, my Friends,
Trust in unyielding hard work,
Trust in youth, which can defeat death,
Trust in future, love life.

(1968)

Suffering Gave Birth to Spirit

By Huang Ying

"Suffering gave birth to spirit. Never stop pursuing. In fact, it encouraged a spirit of Chinese scholars," said Forefinger, a famous Chinese poet, on June 4 in No. 3 Welfare Home in Beijing. He made the above remarks while being asked for comments on his winning the third Poetry Prize of People's Literature.

Forefinger sat in the summer sunshine quietly wearing the pyjamas of the Welfare Home. In his early 50s, Forefinger looks older. When he recalled the past, he said in a low and soft voice: "Agony is in a way wealth for poets. If I had not experienced so much suffering, I couldn't have written those moving poems. Things that happened to me developed into materials for my poems. They welled up in my heart and I have to write them out."

Looking back on the course of his writing, Forefinger divides his poetics into three phases. He wrote the well known Trust in Future, Trilogy of Fish and This is Eight Past Four in Beijing in 1960s. Those poems aroused strong sympathy among the youth of that time. Later he published Crazy

Dog, My Heart, Withered Leaf, Broken Heart, which are different from his style today. But Forefinger prefers his latest poems such as I Write the Song in This Way, The Afternoon of Life, Eight Years in Schizophrenia Home. "They are powerful, more like poems. I'm satisfied with them."

A collection named Forefinger's Poems has reached more than 10 thousand readers since its first publication in January 2001. This could be regarded as the most eclectic, reflecting Forefinger's style and variety of poems, says Wang Qingping, the editor of the People's Literature Publishing House, where the collection was published.

Living in the Welfare Home for more than a decade, Forefinger is accustomed to the quiet and monotonous life. He is sharing a clean and tidy ward with 4 other roommates. But he has no complaints. Maybe the greatest pleasure in his eyes is to read books in the small library of the Welfare Home. "I wish I could spend more time on reading and writing. Although I have accepted destiny's plan for me, I have managed to rebel against it by writing poems in harsh conditions. I think difficulties can help temper myself."

Forefinger's Poem

Dialogue with Forefinger

Q: How did you take a liking for poems?

A: I took a liking for poems when I was in primary school. I liked their rhythms, cadence and rhyme. When other children were reading picture-story books and Russian novels, I began to read poems, such as Poems for Children. I thought they were really beautiful.

Q: This Is Four Past Eight in Beijing was the most stirring works of yours in the 1960s. How did you create it?

A: I wrote the poem on train the day I left home. After the train started, I had a chat with my friends. At night, I found a quiet place to write my poem. I seemed to see the needle and thread that my mother used to sew buttons on my jacket. I thought a lot and wrote many verses. It was the cracking sound made when the train started that grasped me.

Q: People of your generation experienced the violent storms of the times. Did the numerous sufferings and setbacks eventually nourish your poems?

A: Agony is a kind of wealth to

poets, and poems are indeed a sort of release and therapy. I felt extremely happy and satisfied when the agony in my heart was turned into poems. Poets are sensitive. They can sense the things others don't feel. A scene or a thing may not leave any impression on others, but it will leave a trace in the heart of a poet. These traces will accumulate in the heart of the poet and will remain there. So he has got to write poems to reveal them.

Q: How's your life in the welfare



The cover of Forefinger's Poems

by the People's Literature Publishing House

home?

A: Hard. But, I've learned not to worry. I've lived a healthy and down-to-earth life here. I've thought about many questions here, and I plan to write articles on them. But, the conditions here are very poor. I need a creation environment.

Q: When you recover completely and return to the hubbubs of Beijing, a lot of people will come to you. What will you do?

A: Many old friends have come to see me. I enjoy getting together with my friends and reading them poems. But, I find Beijing not my home. Here is home. I take myself as an old nut. I go back to Beijing only to contact my friends and learn new happenings in society.



Forefinger in the No.3 Welfare Home
Photos by Zhuang Jian

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Young Pianist Solo a Huge Success in Beijing

By Xiao Xia

"It's amazing that this wonder child has proved himself to be an artist of such maturity and depth well beyond his years," said May Zhou, a former visiting journalist at Philadelphia Inquirer. Lang Lang, an 18-year-old Chinese pianist made his collaboration debut with the Philadelphia Orchestra on June 1, in The Great Hall of the People in Beijing.

Lang Lang was the soloist for Mendelssohn's Piano Concerto No.1 under the direction of Munich-born maestro Wolfgang Sawalisch. He expressed excitement about performing with the Philadelphia Orchestra and said he would go all out for tonight's performance.

The young pianist's passion and skill carried away the audience of some 10,000, who enthusiastically applauded for an encore. Lang Lang played two extra pieces, including one adapted from a Chinese folk song, and again received massive ovations.

Lang Lang won his first prize at the Second Tchaikovsky International Young Musicians Competition at the age of 13, and was accepted in 1997 into the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia where he currently studies with Gary Graffman, the Director of the Institute.

His collaboration debut with Philadelphia Orchestra is on its centennial celebration tour. Philadelphia Orchestra was the first western orchestra to visit China in 1973. And this is its fourth visit.



Photo by Lu Beifeng

“Simon in the Desert”, Duet of Doubts

By Zhu Lin

While "surrealism" is growing popular in intellectual circles, the playwright and director Huang Jingjing still regards himself a classicist while talking about his drama "Simon in the Desert", which is showing from May 25 to June 16 at the Mini Theatre of People's Art Theatre.

The drama tells about a love story in the production of a film named "Simon in the Desert". It's a vivid reflection of modern people's attitudes toward the opposite sex and bureaucracy in the office, but most of the critics focus on its expressional form. It combines film into the drama, but the speciality doesn't lie here. What is special about it is that the medium of film participates in the narration. Without film, the drama will become incomplete.

But Huang doesn't want people to focus on his form. "I hear some people describing this drama with such terms as 'postmodernism' or 'surrealism', because it uses so much film. But I don't mean to create any special effects at all. In essence, this drama is classic. I just want to say something through a story," Huang protests. As for the reason why he uses film, he explains that the medium of film represents illusion. With the big movie screen behind the actors and actresses, the audience would doubt the story. Has it

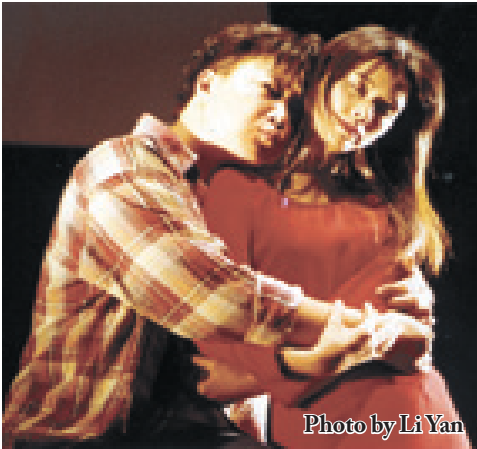


Photo by Li Yan

really happened, or was the whole thing just a dream? "The feeling of doubt is exactly what I want," Huang said.

The producer Yuan Hong mentioned that after watching it, some of the audience said that although they enjoyed the story, they were sceptical about their understanding toward such a drama. Coincidentally, Huang's words sound like an answer to this problem, "After watching so many superficial TV series, the audience begin to complain and want something deep. Now something serious and creative comes, but they are hesitant to accept it. They ask themselves, 'Is it really what I want?'"

Rock the Night Away

By Yi He

Fans at the "Happy Garden" bar rocked with two bands Pupa, Tongue and Wang Lei, one of the most influential rock stars, on the hot summer night of June 1, 2001. This is the first get-together of the 3rd generation of Chinese rock and also the hottest show this summer.

At first, Pupa cranked up the temperature of the night and shook the floor with their strong rhythm. With the girls dancing on the chairs, and the boys waving their arms up to the roof, the audience became more and more ecstatic. Even Chinese rock father Cui Jian joined in the dancing, rather

than leading it with his voice. The audience's familiarity with Tongue's lyrics drove the singers crazy. They even jumped down from the stage, rocking with the audience after their performance. In the end, Wang Lei's band brought the whole performance to its peak. The singers and audience were inspired by each other, gradually attaining the highest state possible in a Rock music show.

The leading cultural company in Rock music, Pulay, recorded this concert and plans to launch a CD. According to Ren Hang from Pulay, this CD is very significant, worth collecting, because the Rock concert will create a strong impromptu trend, with great sway over the audience.



Pupa Band

Photo provided by Ren Hang

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by Xu Yan

Modern E-fans' Ancient '11 Fans'



Red wine bottles lining the walls, wooden floorboards and translucent glass in a brown wood door, soft sofas, classical music, the smell of warm coffee in the air, and brand new computers. Sitting in a cozy chair, I'm not sure whether I am in a club or an Internet cafe.

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Add: 121 B1 Full Link Plaza (丰联广场).

Tel: 65880399

by Xu Yan

For All The Tea in China



Though far from the country's main tea producing regions, Beijing is no backwater when it comes to the tea trade, as a visit to Maliandao Tea Street will confirm. This 1,500-meter-long street is crowded with more than 1,000 shops selling every kind of tea imaginable. Compared with the neighboring Carrefour supermarket, these teashops may look a little shabby. However all the tea sold in Beijing's shops comes through this wholesale market.

Besides the five basic kinds of tea; black tea, green tea, yellow tea, greenish black tea (qing cha) and dark black tea (hei cha), they also sell kung fu tea and oolong tea. "How about jasmine tea" you ask? Of course! Scented teas, such as jasmine, are made from one of the above mentioned types, mixed with the scent of flowers. Which is why scented tea is also called hua cha, or flower tea.

Since it is a wholesale market, prices are much lower than the major shops in Beijing, but don't pay the price marked on the outside of the containers, that is the retail price. Usually, first class tea costs no more than 2,000 yuan per kilogram.

Some of the tea shops offer customers free samples of their newly arrived products. There is one shop, called Jiumu Mingcha (九牧茗茶) selling tea wine. Do have a try!

Add: Maliandao (马连道) Lu, Xuanwu District (south of Beijing West Railway Station, next to Carrefour Maliandao Branch)

Bus: 414, 708, 46 (free parking in the Carrefour underground parking lot)

by Wenlong

Chain Cool Restaurant

The door curtain is made of iron chains, and there are iron bars on the windows. Prison chic pretty much sums up the style of Chan Ku, or Chain Cool, one of this city's more unusual theme restaurants. Chan Ku opened in January, and has already established itself as a hip place to dine out. The decor is cool to cold, lots of gray, and the waiters all wear prison garb, but the food is delicious. Don't be put off by dishes with names like Devils Island, and Pursuit and Capture. It's all good Shanghai, Sichuan and Dongbei cuisine. My only complaint was, I think the decoration and atmosphere could be even cooler and crueler. The assistant manager assured me that improvements were being planned, to make Chan Ku even more prison-like. I'll keep an eye out for the guard dogs and razor wire next time I pay a visit. Add: 35 Xiaoyun Lu (霄云路, Chaoyang District (on the north side of Xiaoyun Lu) Open: 11am - 2-3pm, 5pm - 0-1am

Tel: 84515678

84513456

by Jiao Pei

Photo by Fan Xuedong

NEXT AD DEADLINE

June 11th

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本版急需英文广告采编1名

Music (音乐)

Beijing Concert Hall 北京音乐厅
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西城区六部口北新华街1号 6605-5812

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TEL: 65956962

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Baiyi Road, Straight north from Capital Stadium on Baiyilu, on east side of South Gate of Agriculture and Science University
海淀区白颐路农科院南门东侧 50 米, 6517-7744 ext. 2286, 5pm-2am.

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Get Lucky Bar 豪运酒吧 (Haoyun juba)

Taiyang Gong, East of University of International Business and Economics, near Taiyang Market)
朝阳区太阳宫经贸大学南门东侧, 6429-9109, 6420-4249, 5pm-2am. Hard to find, but worth the trip. Beijing's up and coming underground rock venue. Live shows every Tuesday, Friday and Saturday.

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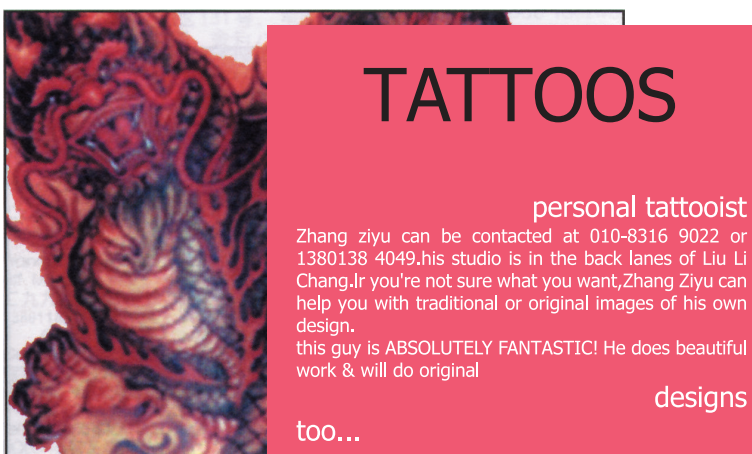
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9:00-20:30; 6491.0386

Beijing Golf Club 北京高尔夫球俱乐部

East Side of chaobai River Reservior, shunyi District
Beijing International Golf Club

BUNGEE JUMPING (蹦极)

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(房山拒马娱乐有限公司)
Shidu Area, Fangshan District
房山区十渡;
8:00-17:00; 6418.1099

CLIMBING (攀岩)

Culture Club 百泉文彩俱乐部健身中心

1st Floor, East Gate Plaza, 29 Dongzhongjie, Dongcheng District
东城区东中街 29 号;
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In the oldest part of the old Peking our Xuanwu-hutong Tour will take you though the thousand-year-old Hutong (narrow alley) by rickshaw where you can chat with the local people in their hundred years old courtyard houses, walk about in the Hutongs, visit a local farmer's market, go into a Local Kindergarten and an old nightclub of the Qing Dynasty. The last stop you may also have a cup of tea in a three hundred years old Peking Opera House, the Zheng-Yi Temple Theatre, which is the only one wooden constructed theatre architecture left.

(8610)6302-7010
(8610)8315-5495

By Wang Dandan

The long wait appears to be almost over. Years of negotiations on China's accession to the WTO seem to be drawing to a successful conclusion. This puts Beijing in the limelight, as more and more of the world's corporate giants will now want to establish themselves in the capital.

However some analysts have sounded the alarm. Companies seeking prime office space had better move quickly as the expected surge in demand for international Grade A space will quickly absorb the current supply and prices are certain

Prime CBD Address

to rise. The clear message is: if you want to move into quality, you better move now.

Foreign corporations to embrace Beijing property market
You could almost hear the sighs of relief echo through corporate boardrooms all over the world, and the buzz of eager anticipation. Because for foreign businesses, China's accession the WTO is a dream that comes true.

The lure of massive market potential has always been a lure to international business players. But without the required levels of market access, controls and regulations, most have chosen to remain on the sidelines. In fact, only about 29% of the Fortune 500 companies currently have a presence in China.

Now that WTO looks soon to be ratified, major international corporate, and foreign businesses of all types and sizes will be accelerating

their plans to enter China. And as every one of them will attest, successfully competing in China means having their headquarters in Beijing. So whatever China's new status brings in the future, there will be an almost immediate impact on one of Beijing's most nagging problems: the slumping commercial property market. Everyone with an interest - the government, developers, investors and agents - now have reason for optimism, because new and much needed business will soon be coming their way.

The right time for a limited time

If one is looking for office space in Beijing, the timing could not be better. Every CEO and CFO knows that oversupply has depressed prices by an astounding 60% since the mid 1990s. The cost of Grade B and domestic Grade A offices will remain low for the foreseeable future. But sources agree, this is not the case for the genuine international grade A properties. There are only a handful of top notch developments and no more are due to come on stream for quite some time.

So there may soon be a shortage of the type of space multinationals require. They need prime space with the highest quality management and the most comprehensive service and support facilities. For them, these are not mere luxuries, but absolute necessities to increase their competitive edge; not only from operational efficiencies, but from enhanced status and prestige as well.

"The price for prime space is sure to rise", one analyst predicts. "Those that delay will either have to pay more for quality, or end up settling for inferior space." The opportunity is now and it may not last.

What all this means is that for multinationals seeking to establish their headquarters in Beijing, a rare window of opportunity is now open. For the time being, the highest quality space is now available at very af-



Picture by Liu Yang

fordable prices.

Prime of the prime

One of the highest profile properties in the nation's capital today is the new Oriental Plaza. Few would argue that it's a strategically ideal address for blue chip multinationals to locate their corporate headquarters in China.

It's not only handy to Wangfujing, the Forbidden City, the Great Hall of the People, Tian'anmen Square and the future national theatre, but also the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation, the Beijing Municipal Government, the General Administration of Customs for the PRC and the Ministry of Communications are all immediate neighbors.

Regardless of which of the high profile grade A properties best suits a company's needs, with China's accession to the WTO imminent, most analysts seem to agree that the time to invest is now.

"HOUSING" welcome your feedback: What kind of difficulties do you encounter when looking for housing in Beijing? What kind of information do you need? What can we help you with?

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Toy Library Set in Sun Crest



By Wen Long

As children around the world celebrated their very own festival on June 1, Sun Crest Apartments located near the circle of CBD, opened Beijing's first toy library as a festive present to the children of this multicultural community.

The target customers of the library are children under the

age of eight. It provides different types of toys, aimed at helping children learn and grow as they play. For example, the reading room features not only books, but puppets too, so the storytellers, either other children or their parents, can act out the story being told. In the engineering room, children can construct all kinds of things with kid proof knives, scissors, rulers and hammers. The other sections include a clinic, concert hall, racetrack, and a Lego room. All feature both English and Chinese introductions.

At present, of all the residents at the Sun Crest Apartment, more than 40 percent are expatriates. The second section of Sun Crest Apartments, consisting of four apartment buildings, is currently under construction and one of them is now on sale.

New Apartments on the 3rd Ring Road

By Xu Yan

Last week we introduced some new apartments near the second Ring Road, this week we feature several in the vicinity of the Third Ring Road.

North: ①Huazhan International Apartment (华展国际公寓 Huazhan Guoji Gongyu), ready for living; northeast of Madian Qiao. The current price is 8,800 yuan/m². Phone 84560386.

②International Friendship Garden (国际友谊花园 Guoji Youyi Huayuan), ready for living; 2 Zuojiazhuang, North Third Ring Road. The current price is \$1,328/m². Phone 64649264/62175888.

③Phoenix Town (凤凰城 Feng Huang Cheng), available for living on 12/2001; southwest of Sanyuan Qiao. The current price is 10,000 yuan/m². Phone 64600111/5111.

East: ④International Harbor (国际港 Guo Ji Gang), available for living on 03/2002; northeast of Sanyuan Qiao. The current price is 8,500 yuan/m². Phone 64629996/6608/5608.

⑤First Shanghai Center (第一上海中心 Diyi Shanghai Zhongxin), ready for living; south of Liangmaqiao Road. The current price is \$2,600/m². Phone 84560386/87.

⑥Lakeside Garden (清境明湖 Qing Jing Ming Hu), ready for living; at 5 West Road Chaoyang Park. The current price is \$2,000/m². Phone 65381280/81.

⑦Lianbao Apartments (联宝公寓), ready for living; North Gongrentiyuchang Road, 5 Xili Xingfu Yicun, Chaoyang District. The current lowest price is 9,000 yuan/m². Phone 64158051.

⑧Global Trade Mansion (世贸国际公寓 Shimao Guoji Gongyu), available for living on 3-8/2002; 9 Guanghua Road, Chaoyang District. The current price is 13,000 yuan/m². Phone 65060123/5678.

(to be continued)
The above data is the latest available. Provided in part from C. B. Consulting.

北京青年报
BEIJING TODAY
今日出版

房地产版(英文版)
让我们和太阳一起升起

《北京青年报·房地产版(英文版)》是《北京青年报》每周五推出的房地产及相关产业的广告专版,其英文版按照发行,媒体优势不言而喻。针对房产客户的需求,让公司决策层直接阅读到相关内容,更具针对性,力事使客户的广告效力发挥至最大!

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Performances



Dream of Dunhuang A big national song & dance drama performed by Lanzhou Song & Dance Troupe that tells the story of the discovery of Dunhuang's Mogao Grottoes 100 years ago. Where: Poly Theatre, Dongsitiao (东四十条) Dongcheng District. Bus 106 or subway to Dongsitiao. When: June 8 and 9, 7:30 pm Admission: 300/400/500 yuan Tel: 65001188-5682

Liar A humorous Italian

drama. Where: China Children's Theater, 64 Dong'anmen Dajie (东安门大街), Dongcheng District. Bus 103, 104, 108 to Dong'an Shichang (东安市场). When: Now - June 17, 7:15 pm (except Mon) Tel: 65129687

Simon in the Desert

Performed by Jiang Zhuqing, Qin Yue, Li Wei, Hu Xiaoguang. Where: People's Art Small Theatre (Renyi Xiaojuchang), 22 Wangfujing Dajie. Bus 101, 103, 108 to National Gallery (美术馆) When: Now - June 16, 7:30 pm Admission: 60 yuan Tel: 65250123

Punchline Comedy

Punchline brings internationally acclaimed comedians to Beijing. Three comedians per show, direct from the "Comedy Store" in London's West End. Richard Morton, Junior Simp-

son, Tim Clark. Where: Island Club (中心岛俱乐部), inside Tuanjiehu Park. When: June 19 Admission: 200 yuan For bookings, call 85978390 or the John Bull Bar 65325905



Movies & Musics

Sculpting in Time--movies from Southwest France My name is Joe Director: Ken Loach, 1996, 108 minutes. You should call to book a week ahead. Where: Sculpting In Time. 15 Chengfujie (成府街) Haidian District. When: Tuesday, Thursday, June 12, 14, 7:30 pm Tel: 62521746

National Anthem (Guo Ge) 2001 110minutes This is a dramatization of the life story of the composer of China's national anthem. Where: Sino-Japanese Youth Exchange Center Conference Hall, 40 Liangmaqiao Lu (approx. 1km east of the Kempinski Hotel). When: Friday, June 15, 8:00 pm Admission: 50 yuan Tel: 64615318/9

German Movie-- Lily Marlene (1981) Director: Rainer Werner Fassbinder. Only 40 seats!! Where: Box Cafe, 5 Xiwangzhuang Xiaoqu (西王庄小区), opposite Tsinghua Tongfang Mansion Bus 375 to east gate of Tsinghua University. When: Saturday, June 9, 7:30 pm. Admission: 5 yuan, including one beverage Tel: 62791280

Pipa Recital by Fan Wei China Youth Symphony Orchestra. Where: Beijing Concert Hall, 1 Beixinhuajie Liubukou West Chang'an Avenue. Bus 7 to Liubukou (六部口). When: Saturday, June 9, 7:30pm. Admission: 30-180 yuan Tel: 66057006

Piano Recital by Alexander Gravylyuk 1st Prize Winner of

Galleries

Works of modern calligraphers Where: Zhengpinzhai gallery (正品斋画廊), Yi 36 W. Liulichang. When: now - June 17, 9:00 am - 9:00 pm Admission: free Tel: 63034259

Red Hot A co-curated ex-



hibition featuring the art of 11 contemporary Chinese artists at various stages in their careers. Where: Red Gate Gallery, Levels 1 & 4, Dongbianmen Watchtower (东便门角楼), Chongwen District. When: now - June 10 Tel: 65251005

Modern art from Courtyard's stable The latest works by Beijing-based modern artists Yue Minjun and Zhang Gong, including silk-screen prints, oil painting, and fiberglass sculptures. Where: Courtyard Gallery, 95 Donghuamen Dajie (东华门大街), Dongcheng District. When: now - June 18, Mon. - Sat, 11:00 am - 7:00 pm, Sun 12:00 am - 7:00 pm Tel: 65268882

Tibetan art in Beijing Works by Tibetan artists Ba



Mazhaxi, Ji Meichilie, Ga De and Bian Ba. Where: Creation Gallery (可创画廊), Ritan Dongyi Jie (日坛东乙街), Chaoyang District. When: Now - June 11, 10:00 am - 7:00 pm Admission: free Tel: 65067570

Weather

WEEKEND



Saturday, 9, June
Clear / cloudy
Max: 35C.
Min: 22C.



Sunday, 10, June
Clear / cloudy
Max: 34C.
Min: 22C.

NEXT WEEK



Monday, 11, June
Clear to overcast
Showers in parts of area
Max: 32C. Min: 20C.



Tuesday, 12, June
Overcast / showers to cloudy
Max: 34C.
Min: 20C.



Wednesday, 13, June
Cloudy.
Max: 32C.
Min: 22C.



Thursday, 14, June
Cloudy / clear
Max: 33C.
Min: 22C.



Friday, 15, June
Clear / cloudy
Max: 35C.
Min: 23C.



Saturday, June 9
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Sunday, June 10
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6528.0932

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Dongcheng District
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府膳
Official Food

Referring to the TAN Family Cuisine which was handed down from the Qing Dynasty.

ADD: 2nd Floor, GuangHua Hotel. Dongsanhuan Beilu,

Chaoyang District, Beijing.

TEL: 65811289, 65819966 ext. 3033

FAX: 65814764

Beijing Roast Duck

北京烤鸭店

Building 3, Tuanjie Lake,
Chaoyang District
朝阳区团结湖北口 3 号楼
11:40-14:00, 17:00-21:30
6852.4003

Bianyifang Roast

Duck Restaurant

便宜坊

2A Chongwenmenwai Dajie,
Chongwen District
崇文区崇文门大街甲 2 号
11:00-14:00, 17:00-21:30
Tel: 6712.0505

乡瑶酒吧

众所周知西单是北京有名的闹市区, 偏在这闹市中的一角, 很好听的名字“乡瑶酒吧”, 早在 1995 年就已开业了, 当时京城酒吧很少, 三里屯酒吧街尚未成气候, 时值中国首届“不插电”原创歌曲演唱会的筹备、排练中, 每晚乡瑶酒吧就像一个排练场, 来自全国各地的音乐人, 轮番上阵, 演绎他们的创作歌曲, 时值也翻唱一些经典老歌, 此后的六年中每晚的演出从未停止过, 从个人或随意组合的原创风格逐步演变成创意性改编翻唱老歌, 专业组合为主的演出风格, 除演出之外, 酒吧现调的鸡尾酒也是一大特色, 传统鸡尾酒不必多提, 一些新潮时尚的鸡尾酒很值得一提, 其中一款叫燃烧的蓝宝坚尼(一款意大利著名跑车的名字), 分两个杯子, 一个鸡尾酒杯中倒入咖啡酒, 香草酒, 白利甜酒及八角酒分成四层点燃, 另一个为烈酒杯加满蓝橙酒点燃, 然后倒入点燃的鸡尾酒杯中, 在昏暗的灯光下, 一条蓝色火链冲入另一个火海, 然后一饮而尽, 我想喝完之后一定可以象舒马赫一样开飞车了。酒吧的墙上有一条长长的约一尺宽的条幅, 离地面不高, 客人坐着刚好可以写一些字在上面, 现在上面写满了各种留言, “我爱 xxx”, “希望下次再见到你”等表达爱意的居多。我想大多数留言者希望再来时还能看到自己的字迹。于是我也提笔写了一句“xx 曾在此喝醉”。地址: 西单华威大厦一层 电话: 66025039

Country Ballad Bar

Xidan is a well-known busy downtown area in Beijing. Amidst this bustling atmosphere there is a bar, with a nice name, "Country Ballad." It was opened as early as 1995, when there were few bars in Beijing and the Sanlitun Bar Street was only in embryo. For the following six years, Country Ballad has become a rehearsal stage, at the beginning for individual or randomly grouped singers singing original songs and occasionally old songs, and finally for professional groups adapting old songs. Besides performance, another feature of the bar is its cocktail. There are some vogue cocktails apart from traditional ones. One such cocktail is called "Burning Lamborghini," in two glasses. One is filled with four-layer cocktail, with burning wine on each layer; and the other glass is spirit. The spirit is ignited and then poured into the cocktail glass. In the dim light, a blue fire chain plunges into another burning sea, which was then tossed off. One will definitely beat Schumacher in Formula 1 after he drinks it up, I think. On the wall of the bar hangs a long scroll, not high above floor, just an arm's reach when one sits on chair beside it. It's the right place to leave some words on. In fact, it is already full of various messages such as "I love xxx," "Hope to see you next time," etc. I believe most people would hope to see their messages when they come here again, so I also leave one, "xx once got drunk here."

A visit to the grasslands of the north provides a glimpse of a very different China to that seen in the big cities and in the towns and countryside of south and central China. Among the best known of the grassland areas is Bashang Grassland, or Bashang Prairie. The Bashang grasslands stretch from Chengde, to 100 kilometers north of Zhangjiakou, and incorporate the Weichang (围场), Fengning (丰宁), and Zhangbei (张北) grasslands.

Fengning Bashang

by Wang Dandan

Last weekend, a group of friends and I rented a mini bus to go to Bashang (坝上) for a weekend of horse-riding, one of my favorite outdoor activities.

We met at Full Link at 8:30 Friday night, stocked up on snacks and drinks (there's not much in the way of comfort food out on the grasslands) and by 9:30 pm we were heading out of Beijing, along the Airport expressway.

Arrival at Datan

At around 3:00am, we arrived in Datan and stopped at a small village inn called Caoyuan Club, that was set out much like a Siheyuan, or courtyard house. The accommodation was basic, but OK, 4 people to a room, 228 yuan per person for two nights, including meals. We were told that for an extra 100 yuan per person, we could stay in a room with a king-size bed.

At 7:00 that morning, we were woken by a knock at the door, and went out to find a group of villagers, together with our horses, waiting outside the gate. They had all different kinds; short ones, tall ones, white ones, black ones, and, as it turned out, good ones and not so good ones.

Good Horse? Bad Horse?

After a quick breakfast, I selected my horse for the day, a short one with a kind of friendly expression. The owner assured me she was very amiable and that I did not have no problems with her. I did trust him, a grandpa with wrinkled face, but from the moment we set out, I had to battle with her, because all she wanted to do was turn around and go home. The horse was trying to go one way and I was trying to make her go the other, and we were both exhausted before we did not even start our journey!

Anyway, with the help of one of the guides, we had hired 3 guides, by the way, 130 yuan each. If you are considering such an expedition, guides are definitely a worthwhile investment! This one was very experienced with horses and he put up with no nonsense from the one I was riding, leading it along the trail by its halter.

This arrangement worked very well, until the guide had to go off and help someone else. But as soon as he left, my horse just stopped, and no amount of coaxing from me would make him move. So my kind hearted guide exchanged horses with me. His horse was really wonderful, it did everything I told it to; start, stop, start again, it was really marvelous!

However, my friend Andy was having problems with his horse. It neither wanted to go forward nor backward, it just stood still and refused to budge. So, to allow him the chance to experience riding a real horse, I made a bit of a sacrifice and changed horses with him.

Andy was now sorted, but I was in trouble again. The horse decided it had only two modes, either standing still or flat out gallop. At one stage he ran across a river, up a steep hill and onto a road where motorcycles and cars were whizzing by. I could do nothing but hang on and scream.

Eventually, at 11:00am, we arrived at a lake with a small restaurant by the shore, and stopped for a much needed rest under the trees. Before we started out, the boys had been full of enthusiasm for climbing mountains and all sorts of other strenuous activities. However, after 2 solid hours in the saddle, the only talk was about going back!

Back in Time for Dinner

The return journey was much easier than the morning's ride, as the horses were very happy to be going home. They didn't need any encouragement at all; the only thing we had to worry about was tiredness and thirst. If only we'd taken just a little more water with us!

After riding for an hour, we stopped at a house where our guides said there was an underground spring. It was the best water I have ever tasted, pure, clear and unpolluted. The host was very kind and he had two very cute daughters who were too shy to greet us.

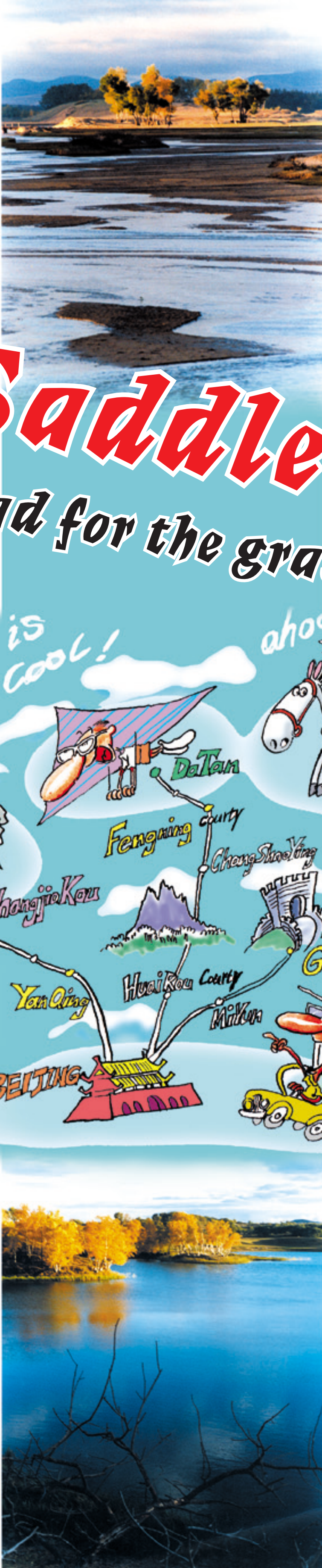
We started off again, and it really was a pleasure to be able to just sit in the saddle and allow the horse to make its own way back, without needing to resort to threats or blackmail. The boys played at horse racing, and it was funny to watch everyone, relaxed and fooling around, just like a lot of kids, quite a contrast to the usual office routine! We finally got back to the guesthouse at around 4:00pm. The charge for the horses was 130 yuan each for the day, but as we had not used the whole day, we only paid 100.

After a short rest, some went to watch the lamb being slaughtered for the evening barbecue. Although I love barbecue, I am not so crazy about the slaughter part, so I watched two cooks prepare the firewood instead. It was a really wonderful barbecue, fresh, spicy and delicious!

On the way back to Beijing, everyone was very sleepy, and it would have been a very quiet trip, had it not been for the sound of snoring.

So, at the conclusion of my weekend tour, and I can wholeheartedly recommend such an adventure to anyone who enjoys the outdoor life. If you have any questions, do not hesitate to phone us, on 65902521.

Weichang Bashang



Zhangbei Bashang

Weichang -The Royal Hunting Ground

by Wenlong

In Chinese, Wei means 'enclosed, and Chang means large area.' Weichang is the word used to refer to any royal hunting ground. In ancient times, a particular area designated as the emperor's hunting ground would be enclosed to keep the wild animals living there from wandering away. So you can see the connection between Weichang Prairie and the Qing Dynasty from its name. It was Emperor Kangxi, the most renowned emperor of the Qing dynasty, who opened this area as his personal hunting ground in 1681.

Weichang Prairie is located in the northern most part of Hebei Province, 350 kilometers north of Beijing. It is also known as Mulan Weichang (木兰围场) or Saihanba(塞罕坝) (beautiful mountain塞罕坝) Forrest Park. Covering more than 60 thousand hectares, there are many historic sites here, such as barracks and famous battle-fields.

The rolling grasslands and wide blue skies are a welcome relief from city life. Also of interest are the Drill Ground used by generals of the Qing Dynasty, and Jiangjun Paozi, or General Lake, where Kangxi's uncle was killed in battle.

How to get there:

Take the Beijing-Chengde Expressway and turn north after arriving in Chengde. Beijing - Miyun (密云) - Gubeikou (古北口) - Chengde (承德) - Siheyong (四合永) - Weichang (围场)

Or you can take long distance bus from the Xizhimen long distance station (西直门) to Mulan Weichang. Mini bus: 35-41 yuan per person. Buses depart every hour.

Accommodation and food: There are many hotels offering good service there, and don't miss the local style roast lamb, fresh mushrooms and milk products. They really are delicious!

Recommended route:

The Drill Ground and Jiangjun Paozi are your first stops in the morning. Miaogong (庙宫) Reservoir is only 20 kilometers from Weichang County, where you can go boating or swimming, or just relax in the sun.

Zhangbei Grassland

Zhangbei Grassland, or more specifically, Zhangbei Zhongdu (Middle Capital) Grassland, is situated in the west of Hebei Province, beyond the Great Wall. Zhangbei County is about 250 kilometers from Beijing and covers an area of over 4,000 sq. kilometers. With temperatures in



Beijing hitting the high thirties re-cently, Zhangbei summer alternative, with the

Picture by Li Yue

is a cool mercury rarely going over 25 centigrade.

Besides the grassland scenery, the Dageta (大塔) Stone Forest and the relics of Zhongdu (Middle Capital of the Yuan Dynasty) give Zhangbei a broad appeal. The Dageta Stone Forest is a forest of hexahedron shaped stone pillars, formed by a volcanic eruption 25 million years ago. The only counterpart to this stone forest in the world is "Giant Dam" in Northern Ireland.

In 1307, Emperor Da De of the Yuan Dynasty ordered a subsidiary capital to be founded at Zhangbei. 700 years later, there is very little left of this royal summer resort. However some traces can still be found, and if getting away from the heat and noise of the city isn't enough, it's a great place to come and practice a bit of amateur archaeology.

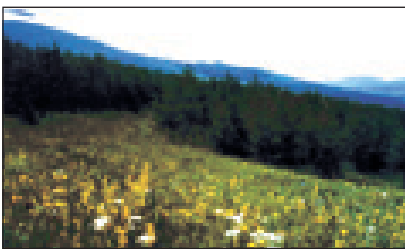
How to get there: By car, Beijing - Yanqing (延庆) - Huailai (怀来) - Zhangjiakou (张家口) - Zhangbei County (张北县) - Zhongdu (中都)

Accommodation and food: Standard hotel room: 70 yuan per person; Mongolian yurt: 40-45 yuan per person. Whole roast lamb: 580 yuan each.

Recommended itinerary: See the Zhongdu Relics in the morning, then spend the afternoon at the Dageta Stone Forest.

Note: The temperature can change very quickly during the day, so take a sweater and long trousers with you. Sunglasses, hat, and sunscreen are also a must. Horse riding is available, and you can rent riding boots from the locals before you start out.

Photo by Fan Jiwen



Stone Forest